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POLITICS IN LEEDS, 1852-1865

University — Université
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Degree for which thesis was presented — Grade pour lequel cette thèse fut présentée
M.A.

Year this degree conferred — Année d'obtention de ce grade 1983	Name of Supervisor — Nom du directeur de thèse DR. D.J. MOSS

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POLITICS IN LEEDS 1852-1865

by

ⓒ RICHARD M. GREEN

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

Fall, 1983

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....
Supervisor

....

....

Date 2 September, 1983

For my wife Valerie
without whose love, support,
and sacrifice
this thesis would not have
been completed.

ABSTRACT

This study is an analysis of local and parliamentary politics in one of the major cities of Victorian England during the 'age of equipoise'. Although party politics in Leeds lost some of the intensity exhibited in the twenty year period following the first Reform Act, enough partisan feeling remained to kindle sporadic warfare at the local level and a consistent struggle in parliamentary contests.

Links are established between political activity which took place at the municipal level - in Town Council, the Board of Guardians, and the Board of Highway Surveyors - and parliamentary elections. A major split within Liberal ranks was initiated partly as a result of friction between 'whig' and 'radical' sections during municipal elections and the rift was widened when the Liberal-controlled Town Council tried to usurp the functions of the radical-dominated Board of Highway Surveyors. The dispute was carried over into the 1857 parliamentary elections when the radicals tried to ensure that their nominee was one of the two Liberal candidates. Conservative organizational activity at the ward level for municipal contests undoubtedly helped the party in the parliamentary election of 1865.

Edward Baines, whose pre-occupation with voluntaryism in education was another source of Liberal disunity, emerged from the back-rooms of politics to become a Member of Parliament. A change in the focus of his activities to franchise reform, together with his use of the Leeds Working Men's Parliamentary Reform Association, restored harmony to the 'party of all shades'. However, his dedication to the cause of the £6 franchise cost him the support of some Leeds electors and enabled the return of the Conservative candidate at the head of the poll.

During the period, Leeds was a two-member constituency with each elector having two votes. A psephological analysis of the voting behaviour of a sample of electors through five parliamentary elections shows that cross-party voting was quite significant. Approximately half of the split voting occurred within an election and the rest was the result of decisions to change support for a party between elections. Enumerators' returns for the 1851 census have been used to determine the social characteristics of a fraction of the sample. In addition to the longitudinal analysis, an evaluation of the voting behaviour of several occupational groups is investigated. A dramatic change in party allegiance of the 'drink interest' is shown.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My greatest intellectual debts are owed, in chronological order, to Mr. C.W.R. Ellis, former Head of History at Carre's Grammar School, Sleaford, and to Dr. D.J. Moss, my supervisor, whose encouragement and understanding have sustained me for many years. Dr. D. Fraser, Professor of Modern History at the University of Bradford, not only suggested the topic of this thesis as a possible area of study but also responded generously to enquiries on several occasions, provided me with material and, not least, entrusted me with his own copy of his Ph.D. dissertation.

In Leeds, my thanks are owed to Mrs. A. Heap, Local History Librarian at the Leeds Central Library, Mr. J.M. Collinson, Head of the Leeds City Archives, Mr. R.H. Davis, Sub-Librarian of the Brotherton Library, Leeds University, and Mrs. G.C.F. Forster, Honorary Librarian of the Thoresby Society.

At the University of Alberta, I am grateful to Professor J.P. Johnston, Department of Political Science, for pointing me in the right direction for the statistical study; the Department of History, which provided funds for computing the data; and Mr. C. Humphrey, Social Sciences Statistical Analyst, Department of Computing Services, for translating my questions into computer output with such efficiency. Mr. M.L. Sharma, Head of the Periodicals and Microform Centre, Rutherford Library, showed great consideration for the extraordinary demands which I place on the photocopying system.

Finally, my late father, Walter Green, acted as my link with Leeds between my visits to the city. It is my hope that he would be pleased with our endeavours.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

> Annihilate Leeds and I am poor indeed; ruined in fortunes and bankrupt in affections.
>
> Robert Hall, March 1857.[1]

I

Thirty years ago Norman Gash exhorted historians to carry out more studies at the local level in order to provide a sounder basis for generalizations made in books like Politics in the Age of Peel.[2] Since 1953, several studies have been carried out which have focussed on the political activity in a city, region, or county during the nineteenth century. Fifteen years later, however, E.P. Hennock noted that Leeds remained a neglected city.[3] The situation has been remedied to a large extent by the work of Dr. Derek Fraser, whose analysis of Leeds politics at the vestry, municipal and parliamentary levels for the period 1830-1852 has been published in several articles and books.[4] In the preface to A History of Modern Leeds Dr. Fraser notes the interest of scholars in the urban development of the city but it appears that parliamentary politics in Leeds during the period 1852-65 have not been analyzed in detail.[5] This thesis undertakes an examination of the municipal and parliamentary politics in the town during that period.

Apart from the Baines collection there is generally a dearth of private papers for Leeds political figures. However, the existence of three local newspapers for the complete period, and a fourth for more than half the thirteen years under consideration, provide some compensation. The press is an important source of information for, in the words of Christopher Kemplay, the publisher of the Leeds Intelligencer, "the interests of the party and the press representing that party are very intimately bound up together".[6] Edward Baines, who with his brothers published the Leeds Mercury, and Robert Meek Carter, an important figure in Leeds politics who became part owner of the Leeds Express, would both undoubtedly have agreed with Kemplay.

In addition, a complete set of pollbooks for the five parliamentary elections which were held in the period 1852-65, and several trade directories help to compensate for the lack of other documentary sources. Moreover, given that pollbooks are extant it would be inconceivable to consider mid-nineteenth century English politics without an analysis of the data which is provided in them. Two studies have been undertaken: one is a longitudinal study which traces the voting behaviour of a group of electors through the five elections and the other is concerned with the voting patterns of specific occupational groups at each election. Discussion of this aspect of the research is provided in Chapter VI.

II

Leeds, already well established as a major town in the eighteenth century, had a population of 53,276 by 1801. The census of 1851 showed that there had been more than a threefold increase during the fifty-year period and its population of 172,270 made it the fifth largest town in England. While the population increase during the first half of the nineteenth century was, to a large extent, the result of inmigration, it has been determined that the increase experienced after

1851, owed more to a natural increase of the citizens of Leeds than to migration from other areas.[7]

By 1871, with boundaries that encompassed approximately 19,000 acres[8] Leeds was first among English provincial towns in terms of area and with 259,212 inhabitants it was fourth in terms of population. However, in spite of having an acreage four times as large as either Liverpool or Manchester, three quarters of the town's population was concentrated in approximately one-eighth of its area.[9] Out-townships such as Headingley, Chapeltown, Bramley, and Farnley were essentially villages in 1870, and it was only later in the century that they lost their rural characteristics and became suburbs of the expanding city.

The geographical position of the town, on the fringe of the woollen manufacturing districts of the West Riding and the agricultural regions of the North and East Ridings, had enabled it to flourish as an entrepôt. Then, the completion of a navigable river link to the East coast port of Hull in 1700, gave it status as a commerical centre of more than county significance. Leeds merchants were able to maintain their pre-eminence by judicious support for the improvement of the water link to Hull and the cutting of a canal to Liverpool which was completed in 1816. The subsequent development of road and rail networks which converged on the town reinforced its importance as an exporter to European and world markets.

Of the five great provincial towns of Victorian England, Leeds was less wealthy than Birmingham, Liverpool, and Manchester but wealthier than Sheffield. Yet the diversity of its economy provided Leeds with stability and made it much less vulnerable to the impact of sudden increases or decreases in economic activity which other towns experienced. In the words of one historian, the prosperity of the town in the nineteenth century "may have been, by some standards, modest but it was well sustained".[10]

In his 1853, "Directory of Leeds and the Clothing Districts of Yorkshire" William White noted that Leeds was the most populous town in the West Riding and was "the principal seat and emporium of the woollen manufacture of England".[11] While the statement may not have been totally untrue with respect to the woollen manufacture, it was far from being a complete picture. In fact by 1850, a serious lack of enterprise had been recognized in the Leeds woollen industry and the Leeds Mercury recorded that it had "unsparingly exposed" for some years the faults and errors of the manufacturers. Slovenliness, apathy, supineness, obstinacy, short-sighted covetousness and dishonesty were all charges which the newspaper felt justified in levelling as general characteristics of the trade. The Liberal journal noted that both William Beckett, the Conservative Member of Parliament for the borough, and Richard Cobden, the Liberal member for the West Riding, had appealed to those involved in the woollen manufacture for closer attention to remedying the deficiencies since, it seemed, they were allowing Belgian and Prussian manufacturers to "run away with their trade".[12] It appears that the result of those appeals was negligible. Even the progressive firm of Benjamin Gott displayed only the traditional broad cloths of the Leeds area at the Great Exhibition of 1851, whereas firms from other West Riding towns showed many varieties of cloths and worsteds. In 1797, there had been 130 woollen merchant firms in Leeds and the town had controlled the major share of the woollen textile industry, but by 1851, the number of firms had decreased to forty and Leeds was no longer pre-eminent in the Riding as the centre of the trade.[13] In addition, the firm of John Marshall and Co., which had made Leeds the foremost European flax spinning centre in the first half of the nineteenth century, could not maintain its position during the remainder of Victoria's reign.[14]

Nonetheless, in spite of its declining importance as a centre of the woollen industry there were other compensations. The availability of cheap coal, water and "every mode of conveyance" provided Leeds with fundamental advantages in a variety of industrial activities which, in the second half of the nineteenth century, eventually displaced woollen textiles as the major employer.[15] Most of the new activities, however, owed their origin to the town's earlier supremacy in the woollen industry. Engineering, for example, developed as the demand for machinery in the woollen and flax mills increased. Gradually, the engineering firms diversified their products to include railway engines, agricultural machinery, and machine tools. While its strategic location between industrial and agricultural areas made it, perhaps, natural that the town should develop a leather industry due to its ready access to the hides of livestock, one of the stimuli for the industry's early growth was the demand created by machinery makers for heavy leather transmission belting.[16] By 1850, the leather tanning industry in Leeds was the second largest in the country and it has been claimed that twenty years later the town was the most important centre of leather production in Britain.[17] Stead and Simpson whose names eventually became recognized throughout the country in the retail shoe trade started their business in Leeds by making ready-made boots. By 1858, Leeds bootmakers were producing 750,000 pairs of boots annually and three thousand workpeople were employed in the industry. The phenomenal development of the ready-made clothing industry owed something to the skills which were developed in the town in the woollen manufacturing industry. Joseph Hepworth, whose name was to become associated with a nation-wide chain of clothing stores, started in Leeds as a tailor in 1858. As late as 1906, Montagne Burton moved his clothing business to Leeds clearly showing, by his relocation, the continuing supremacy of the town in the clothing industry.

It has been estimated that only one in four or five people worked in Leeds factories in 1841 and that the majority of them were employed in small workshops which did not use steam engines. On the basis of those estimates it has been suggested by one historian that Leeds experienced its industrial revolution between 1840 and 1860 and that it was based on the developments associated with heavy engineering and the production of ready-made clothing.[18] By 1850, the town has been described as being a forest of factory chimneys with sixty percent of the workforce employed in factories.[19] Leeds was not a pleasant place in which to live as the Leeds Times confirmed cogently:

> That Leeds is a smoky town, is unfortunately beyond dispute. It has got the worst character of any town in the Kingdom. Strangers visit it seldom, and get out of it as quickly as they can; and they ransack the whole vocabulary of abuse for terms to describe its begrimed and besmutted aspect, and its foul breath.[20]

Given the disruptions of rapid economic development and the fundamental change in the deployment of the workforce together with the unpleasant surroundings Leeds should have been ripe for Chartist agitation in the 1840's. Indeed Feargus O'Connor, leader of the Chartists, established the movement's newspaper, the Northern Star, in Leeds in

1837 and local Chartists became extremely active in municipal politics but in 1844 the newspaper was relocated in London and the electoral successes of Leeds Chartists had made them participants within the "system" rather than members of an outside pressure group.[21] The existence of a large number of craftsmen and skilled artisans added to the social stability of the town. The attitude of Leeds factory owners undoubtedly helped to maintain social harmony. For example, even though some of them had opposed the aims of the Factory Reform movement, initiated in Leeds by Richard Oastler, Leeds' employers, like others in Yorkshire, had not tried to circumvent the Ten Hours Act by adopting a relay system for their child employees thereby effectively retaining a long working day for adults. The Leeds Intelligencer suggested that an effective ten hour day might "retard in some degree momentary and excessive activity, (but) it would prolong the seasons of full employment and shorten the intervals of depression . . . and (employers would) escape the disgrace of throwing their numerous operatives entirely out of employment".[22]

Obviously, Leeds factory owners agreed with the sentiments expressed by the Conservative journal. Certainly one historian has concluded that conditions in Leeds' mills were not generally as unpleasant as those in other centres.[23]

III

The political boundary of the borough of Leeds in the nineteenth century had its basis in a parish boundary which had been designated in the medieval period.[24] A charter of incorporation granted to Leeds in 1626, which superseded one granted in 1207, gave the Corporation jurisdiction over the entire parish.[25] The seventeenth century charter remained in effect until the Municipal Reform Act of 1835. However, apart from a brief period during the Protectorate Parliaments of 1654 and 1656, Leeds did not have "that share in the privileges of the constitution to which its population and importance entitled it" until the Parliamentary Reform Act of 1832.[26]

Until it secured its own representatives in Parliament Leeds had to exert what influence it could in national politics through involvement in the selection of county Members of Parliament. During the early nineteenth century, it was the town's liberals who formed the most cohesive group in that respect and they demonstrated their strength in 1826, when they succeeded in using their influence to force the rural Whigs to accept John Marshall, the prosperous Leeds flax manufacturer, as one of the party's two candidates. Four years later the urban liberals, again led by Edward Baines senior, ensured that the radical reformer Henry Brougham became one of the two candidates nominated to represent Yorkshire in the Whig-Liberal interest. The active part played by Leeds Liberals may be attributed partly to their exclusion from town council politics for, until the passage of the Municipal Reform Act, the Corporation was under the control of Leeds Conservatives. It is not surprising, therefore, that the first parliamentary election held in the borough after the 1832 Reform Act resulted in the return of two Liberals.

Nevertheless, Leeds Conservatives were not prepared to concede parliamentary representation as the exclusive domain of the Liberals for, in 1834, when Thomas Babington Macaulay[27] resigned his seat for Leeds to accept an appointment in India, the Conservatives nominated

John Beckett, a wealthy Leeds banker, as their candidate. Although the bid failed Edward Baines junior was to note later that "great sums of money were spent . . . (and) the election became one of great excitement".[28]

The Conservatives paid careful attention to the registration of voters in 1834 and their endeavours were rewarded in the parliamentary election of the following year when Beckett was returned at the head of the poll. Fraser has remarked that the result, which gave Leeds the distinction of being the first of the cities newly enfranchised by the 1832 Act to return a Tory, belies the vision of the growing manufacturing centres of England as undisputed bastion of Liberalism where Toryism withered.[29] In fact Liberal and Conservative support in Leeds was remarkably well-balanced and he has summarized the results of the borough elections from 1834 to 1841 as being indicative of the fragile majorities which each party had in turn.[30]

While the Liberals always fielded two candidates at each general election held in the period 1832-65 the Conservatives usually had only one standard-bearer. Nonetheless, a Conservative was one of the two borough members for twenty-one of the thirty-three years. Apart from elections which were called to confirm an MP as a minister Leeds witnessed no uncontested elections. Just as the Liberals had managed to compensate for their exclusion from the most prestigious body in local politics prior to 1835, the Conservatives, who failed to gain a majority on council for sixty years after that date, maintained their self-esteem, in part, by their active participation in parliamentary politics.

The success of the Leeds Liberals in county politics was not owed totally to frustration at their exclusion from municipal politics. Another factor which helps to explain their activity was the presence of Edward Baines senior in the Liberal camp. He had been a leader in the movement for parliamentary reform and he founded a political dynasty that was to have great influence in both town and county Liberal circles. Before his death, in 1848, he had established the Leeds Mercury as one of the leading provincial newspapers. It had been Baines who had ensured that "Reform" candidates were nominated to run in the Liberal interest in the first borough election and it was Baines who asked Macaulay to become a candidate.[31] Baines succeeded Macaulay in 1834 and remained as one of the two MP's for the town until 1841.

The Conservative newspaper gave recognition to Baines' power when in 1830, the election of the reformers Brougham and Lord Morpeth as Yorkshire members was regarded as a defeat of the county Whigs by the "Bainesocracy" of Leeds.[32] Baines had not achieved his position without disagreement with others in the Whig-Liberal group and in his biography of his father Edward Baines junior wrote that there were Liberals "who looked with much coolness, not to say jealousy, on the proposition to send Mr. Baines to Parliament" a result, he concluded, of "so many years of political and local conflicts".[33] However, Baines had built a political base which was strong enough to survive his own death as was shown when his eldest son, Matthew Talbot Baines was elected for Leeds in 1852. Edward Baines junior succeeded his elder brother in 1859 and remained as one of the borough's MP's for fifteen years.

IV

After the turbulent years of the early nineteenth century the

Houses of Parliament seemed, by mid-century, to have sunk into a state of lethargy. The inertia at the national level of politics was reflected in the problems encountered by party leaders when they attempted to form governments - problems themselves which were a manifestation of the difficulty of assigning party labels to some MP's. Professor Gash has described the situation in the late 1850's as follows:

> the votes which decided the fate of administrations and the dissolution of parliaments were rarely shaped by the nominal issues at stake. Majorities were composed to a large extent of men to whom the matter in dispute was less important than the result. Factious votes were justified by disingenuous arguments in support of dishonest resolutions.34

The latter part of the period under investigation in this study coincides with the six years of Palmerston's second ministry. Even the appearance of stability which his administration gave to national politics was purchased at the cost of shelving the parliamentary reform issue which, if pursued, would have lost Palmerston the support of many Tory backbenchers.

It might be argued that the country could afford the luxury of ill-defined political parties and undisciplined legislators because the mid-century years were characterized by social harmony that was fostered by a strong economy. Yet if it is true that English provinces were more significant as sources of political activity than they are today then it is important to analyse that activity at the local level. If the lack of clearly defined party politics at Westminster was compensated for by meaningful political activity in key provincial constituencies, it would help to explain the reason why parties at the national level were able to survive a fluid political environment and, indeed, why the political fabric did not collapse completely.

Political activity in Leeds in the mid-nineteenth century assumes more significance than may be the case for some constituencies because of the national prominence of Edward Baines junior in the voluntary education and parliamentary reform movements. While Leeds may have appeared to have been the citadel of voluntaryism and parliamentary reform to contemporaries, it is important for an historian to examine the extent to which this was, in fact, a true reflection of local politics.

Leeds provides a good opportunity to undertake such a study for it enjoyed social harmony and sustained economic growth during the period. After the success of two Liberal candidates in the 1852 election one member of each party was returned in subsequent elections which would tend to suggest, perhaps, that Leeds' electors shared the indecision which was evident at the national level. According to Fraser Leeds' politics were established very firmly on a party basis in the period 1830-52.[35] This study attempts to evaluate the extent to which it was true for the following thirteen-year period.

[1] Robert Hall was MP for Leeds from March to June 1857.

[2] Norman Gash, Politics in the Age of Peel, (London: Longmans, Green, 1953), pp. xvi-xvii.

[3] E.P. Hennock, "Composition of Borough Councils," in The Study of Urban History, ed. H.J. Dyos (London: Arnold, 1968), p. 326.

[4] Most of Dr. Fraser's dissertation, "Politics in Leeds 1830-52" (Ph.D. University of Leeds, 1969), has been published in a series of articles and books that are noted in the bibliography.

[5] Derek Fraser, ed. A History of Modern Leeds, (Manchester University Press, 1980), p. xii.

[6] Leeds Intelligencer, 28 May 1859. The Intelligencer (Conservative), the Leeds Mercury (Whig/Liberal), and the Leeds Times (Radical/Liberal) were all published during the period 1852-65. From 3 July 1855, the Leeds Mercury was published three times per week and from 1 October 1861, it became a daily newspaper. The Leeds Express was published from 1857 and like the Leeds Intelligencer and Leeds Times was a weekly publication.

[7] C.J. Morgan, "Demographic Change, 1771-1911," in A History of Modern Leeds, ed. Fraser, p. 49.

[8] G. Kitson Clark, "The Leeds Elite," University of Leeds Review 17 (1974): 232.

[9] A.J. Taylor, "Victorian Leeds: An Overview," in A History of Modern Leeds, ed. Fraser, p. 389.

[10] A.J. Taylor, "Leeds and the Victorian Economy," University of Leeds Review 17 (1974): 302.

[11] William White, Directory and Gazeteer of Leeds and the Clothing Districts of the West Riding of Yorkshire, (Sheffield, 1853; reprint ed., Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1969), p. 13.

[12] Leeds Mercury, 26 January 1850.

[13] R.G. Wilson, Gentlemen Merchants: The Merchant Community in Leeds, 1700-1830, (Manchester University Press, 1971), pp. 129-130.

[14] W.G. Rimmer, Marshalls of Leeds Flax - Spinners, 1788-1886, (Cambridge University Press, 1960) chap. V passim.

[15] W.G. Rimmer, "Occupations in Leeds 1841-1951," Thoresby Miscellany 14 (1967): 158-178. Rimmer has calculated that by 1871 the percentages of those employed in engineering (14.9) and dress (10.2), when combined, exceeded the percentage of those employed in textiles (19.3) although textiles remained the largest single employer until some time between 1881 and 1891.

[16] W.G. Rimmer, "Leeds Leather Industry in the Nineteenth Century," Thoresby Miscellany 13 (1961): 134.

[17] Taylor, "Leeds and the Victorian Economy," p. 300.

[18] Gordon C.F. Forster, "The Beginnings of an Industrial City: Leeds 1690-1840," University of Leeds Review 12 (1969): 36.

[19] Gordon C.F. Forster, "The Making of Modern Leeds," University of Leeds Review 9 (1964-1965): 324.

[20] Leeds Times, 19 January 1850.

[21] The Chartists were able to gain control of the Board of Improvement Commissioners in 1842 - just before its powers were absorbed by town council - and were able to make changes to some of the clauses which were proposed for the Leeds Improvement Act of that year. They formed the majority of Churchwardens from 1842-49 and were unchallenged in their control of the Board of Highway Surveyors from 1843 to 1853. In 1844-45 the only three non-Conservative Guardians were Chartists and they held some seats on town council from 1842. See D. Fraser, "Politics and Society in the Nineteenth Century," in A History of Modern Leeds, ed. Fraser, pp. 285-288.

[22] Leeds Intelligencer, 23 February 1850.

[23] J.T. Ward, "Leeds and the Factory Reform Movement," Thoresby Society Miscellany 13 (1961): 118.

[24] G.R.J. Jones, "To the Building of Kirkstall Abbey," in Leeds and Its Region, eds. M.W. Beresford and G.R.J. Jones, (Leeds: 1967), p. 124.

[25] Gordon C.F. Forster, "From the Foundation of the Borough to the Eve of the Industrial Revolution," in Leeds and Its Region, eds. Beresford and Jones, p. 140.

[26] Edward Baines, The Life of Edward Baines, 2nd. ed. (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans and Roberts, 1859), p. 135.

[27] Thomas Babington Macaulay (later Lord Macaulay) - essayist and greatest of the 'whig' historians.

[28] Baines, Life of Baines, pp. 155-156.

[29] Fraser, "Politics in Leeds," pp. 117-118.

[30] Ibid., p. 305.

[31] Arthur S. Turberville and F. Beckwith, "Leeds and Parliamentary Reform," Thoresby Society Miscellany 12 (1943) passim.

[32] Leeds Intelligencer, 29 July 1830. Cited in Turberville and Beckwith, "Leeds and Parliamentary Reform," p. 31.

[33] Baines, Life of Baines, pp. 148-149.

[34] Norman Gash, Aristocracy and People: Britain 1815-65, (Harvard University Press, 1979) p. 266.

[35] Fraser, "Politics in Leeds," p. 519.

CHAPTER 2

1852: CONSERVATIVE NADIR

> "The Tory Party in Leeds is in a perfectly hopeless and unworkable condition, ..."
>
> *Leeds Times*, 1 May 1852.

I

The Leeds parliamentary election of July 1847 has been described as the most complex and unorthodox of all the elections held in the borough in the period between the first and second Reform Acts.[1] William Beckett, the serving Conservative member, appeared to have put his chance for re-election in jeopardy after he had broken a pledge to his supporters by voting for the repeal of the corn laws. The Liberals in Leeds should have been able to fight the election on the issues of free trade and the extension of the suffrage especially with Joseph Sturge, a leading advocate of universal suffrage, as one of the party's candidates.[2] Both issues, however, were to take a place secondary to that of the question of the involvement of government in education. While Edward Baines senior and junior were committed to the voluntary principle and could therefore give unreserved support to the voluntaryist Sturge, other leaders in the Liberal group gave their support to the further extension of education through government aid. The election resulted in the return of Beckett at the head of the poll, with an increased majority, and the success of the Liberal "educationist" James G. Marshall. It has been calculated that an unprecedented 51.6 percent of those who voted split their votes between Marshall and Beckett.[3] The split in the Liberal ranks had repercussions at the municipal level and Hamer Stansfeld, the chairman of Marshall's election committee, and Darnton Lupton, who had served as a member of the committee, were defeated when they sought re-election to the town council in November 1847. T.W. Tottie, another committee member resigned his seat on council after he was returned by a small majority. Two other Marshall supporters who had been aldermen for several years resigned in 1850. While the "Bainesocracy" may not have been able to sway the parliamentary election because of the overriding principles held on the education issue, they proved themselves able to control politics at the municipal level.[4]

Edward Baines junior had renewed the campaign for Voluntaryism as the direct consequence of Lord John Russell's announcement, in July 1846, that legislation would be introduced to promote a scheme of national education.[5] Baines claimed that a very large majority of the Liberal party had resolved to nominate Sturge as a candidate in Leeds on the ground of his opposition to State endowments. Baines senior, he noted, had "deeply lamented" the rupture in the Liberal party on the education question and the son recorded that it was impossible to avoid the narrative of "this painful difference" in a faithful account of his father's life.[6] Although the "majority" of the Liberal party could not ensure enough votes for "their" candidate, and despite the pain caused by the split, Edward Baines continued his crusade on behalf of Voluntaryism. As each education scheme was brought forward Baines inevitably opposed it.

In March 1850, the Mercury focussed its editorial comment on the education question again. It found the hankering of statesmen after a national system of education astonishing and felt that it was highly inconsistent for Free Traders and those who disapproved of a religious establishment to support such a system. Since religion was the consummating and crowning part of education, an educational system that was controlled by the government would make religion governmental:

> the philosophy of national education is that of communism. It is based on an entire distrust of individual energy and a hatred of free competition; and it rushes, with ROBERT OWEN and LOUIS BLANC, into a forced co-operative society of the entire nation.7

In addition the Mercury's ire had been aroused because W.J. Fox's Education Bill proposed a secular system of schools which would be funded by means of a rate levied without local consent. Baines believed that local self-government and the local control of taxation would be completely upset and, if passed into law, the proposed scheme would rank with "the most centralizing measure ever enacted by the old despotic governments of Prussia and Austria". In the third of a series of editorials condemning the Fox Education Bill, Baines concluded that the people were willing and able to educate themselves and that Government systems fluctuated between the exclusion of religion and the payment of grants to all religions, and between the evils of democratic management and those of despotic management.[8]

The education question certainly aroused the interest of the inhabitants of Leeds. On 11 April 1850, a public meeting was held in the Court House to consider the propriety of petitioning Parliament in favour of Fox's bill. The requisition to the Mayor had been signed by 136 individuals, of whom the majority were working-men. Prominent amongst the gentlemen present were Hamer Stansfeld, Darnton Lupton and Samuel Smiles, all of whom had been members of James Garth Marshall's election committee in the 1847 election.[9] The Mayor, who acted as the chairman for the first part of the meeting, explained that two other requisitions had been received. One group, led by the Vicar of Leeds, Dr. Hook, requested that a meeting be held to support a national system of education that would operate impartially towards all religious communities and be managed at the local level as far as possible. The third requisition, with Edward Baines as a prominent sponsor, noted that the Court House could only accommodate a small fraction of those who wished to attend a meeting and it was suggested that an open-air meeting be held in order to allow a large number the chance to express their opinions. The Mayor reported that the sponsors of the two requisitions had indicated that they would not work together and so he had arranged noon-hour meetings on 15 and 16 April.[10]

In an open letter to the inhabitants of Leeds, Baines labelled the meeting to be held on 15 April as that of "Nondescripts". He suggested that the sponsors of that requisition held widely differing opinions on religion and politics and, he concluded, Leeds had given its judgement three years before on the education question against the same curious combination of religious and political opposites.[11] Baines' editorial appeared on the same page as a list of the members of the general committee of the Yorkshire Society for Promoting National Education. Five of the members of that committee had also been members of James G. Marshall's election committee. Baines followed up his editorial with a poster campaign in which he urged the "Friends of Freedom of Education" to attend the Monday meeting and to defeat more taxes and more government interference.[12]

Rain prevented an open-air meeting on Monday and Baines agreed to hold a joint meeting of the two groups the next day provided that his group could speak first and a vote upon Fox's Education Bill could be taken immediately after the conclusion of his group's presentations. He declined to attend an evening meeting even though it was pointed out that it would be more convenient for the members of the working classes if it were held after working hours. Baines lost the battle for the agenda and the Monday meeting continued in the evening. Resolutions were carried in favour of non-denominational locally controlled schools and a curriculum which allowed time for religious instruction by parents and religious teachers. The weather remained inclement for the meeting held on Tuesday but, it was reported, a large body of working men were present from start to finish in spite of very heavy showers. Hamer Stansfeld, however, condemned the time chosen to discuss a measure that would affect the working classes and claimed that the manner in which they had been treated was "unparalleled and unprecedented in the annals of the borough of Leeds".[13] He had regarded his vote for Beckett in the 1847 election as a vote for the education of the people and he felt that it was not a crime to break party ties and political friendships for "a principle involving the welfare of the working classes"; a reasonable comment given the fact that the Voluntaryists had done little to provide schools. It was mainly the Anglican clergy and congregations who ensured that by 1851, the majority of day school children were educated in 'public' rather than 'private' schools.[14] Samuel Smiles condemned Alderman Carbutt, a member of Sturge's committee in the 1847 election, for suggesting that education should be left to the laws of supply and demand like free trade.[15] He reminded the meeting that Richard Cobden, the Liberal member of Parliament for the West Riding, had described the voluntary system of education as a "ridiculous failure." Joseph Barker, a Chartist member of the Leeds town council from Wortley out-township, condemned Carbutt's assertion that Fox's bill (and by implication all supporters of it) had a strong tinge of socialism and communism without his producing any argument to prove his point. Barker claimed that Sturge had been sacrificed in Leeds by Baines' party.

The voluntaries lost the vote at each meeting and the Intelligencer claimed that the results of the meetings had "rescued the town from the opprobrium of being supposed to hold the absurd dogma that the State has no right to interfere for the education of the people".[16] In an open letter Baines questioned whether, by their conduct, Stansfeld, Smiles and Barker could be considered to be the true friends of liberty.[17] As far as the Mercury was concerned the meetings had achieved little because the weather had prevented the true opinion of the inhabitants from being tested. When the vote was taken at the Tuesday meeting at six o'clock Baines estimated that a crowd of less than two thousand remained - and that since the group consisted chiefly of working men a fair representation of the feelings of the inhabitants of Leeds had not been obtained.

During 1850, Baines continued to attack all suggestions that the State should be involved in national education. At a meeting called for the purpose of establishing a Leeds branch of the National Public School Association, a member of the delegation from the Manchester branch lamented that Leeds had become distinguished throughout England as the residence of a man who had assumed rather a singular position with respect to the education question.[18] In 1851, the Manchester and Salford education schemes were mooted at meetings in Manchester. They provided Baines with more grist for his mill.

On 10 May 1851, Baines concluded an editorial by condemning Cobden's support for the Public School Association's secular scheme. He avowed that although a party might be established in the scheme's favour - even at the cost of breaking the Free Trade and Liberal Party - the religious bodies would never agree to a secular plan. The demise of the Liberal party would ensure the return of a Tory and Protectionist Government and jeopardize an extension of the suffrage.[19] The main weakness in Baines' case for voluntaryism was that his denomination, the Congregationalists, were able to support only one day-school in Leeds. An editorial in the Leeds Times pointed out that the voluntary principle had been chiefly remarkable for the disproportion between the promises and the performances of its advocates.[20] Evidently even stronger feelings prevailed. A meeting of Yorkshire Congregationalists held in Leeds in September 1851 had, claimed Baines, been preceded by many hostile placards aimed at getting the Irish and Chartists to swamp the meeting. Apparently no disruption occurred.

On 17 December 1851, Baines delivered a lecture in Leeds on the National Public School Association and Local Education schemes of education. He had already made the same speech at a number of places, including Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham and Sheffield.[21] Alderman Carbutt managed to maintain tight control of the lecture meeting and prevented Samuel Smiles from addressing the audience. Baines, however, published a letter from Smiles, on the 3 January 1852, which condemned the Voluntaryists. Smiles pointed out that a large portion of the people had had their "desires whetted for the enjoyment of political privileges, . . . (but were) nevertheless, allowed to grow up unlettered, untrained, and untaught". Increased education would help to bridge the gulf which separated rich from poor and would help to ensure that the extension of political power would be accompanied by increased security for all classes.[22] Baines, in reply, warned that the adoption of the educational laws of the Continent meant the adoption of "their police . . . their espionage, and all the other oppressive and degrading machinery that accompanies them".[23] After a further rebuttal by Smiles and a final comment by Baines, the Mercury carried little about the education question from the end of January 1852. A comment on the Manchester and Salford Bill and the Public Schools Bill appeared in March. In June it noted a comment by Disraeli which it considered to be the Conservative election manifesto on education. Under Disraeli's scheme the Church, opined Baines, would receive nearly all the money and power granted by Parliament for educational purposes and there would also be a decrease in the control exercised over those schools by the Government.[24] For Baines the reduction in government control would not be worth the price of increased Church influence.

It is probable that the paucity of comment about educational matters during the period from February until the election of July 1852 was the result of a deliberate decision by Baines to mend the division in the Liberal ranks. He preferred to keep the matter of parliamentary reform to the fore - an area less liable to sow discord in the party of all shades. Derby's first cabinet was formed in February and the uncertain Tory majority from that month until the election was called in July made everyone aware that the Government could be defeated in Parliament at any moment. Baines was obviously willing to sacrifice his strong commitment to the voluntary principle to restore Liberal unity. It would have been impossible for him to keep the education issue to the fore, even in Leeds, the centre of voluntaryism, and to have expected that he would have continued to play a major role in the party. He was too much the politician to allow that.

II

While the Liberals appeared to be willing to let issues which might divide them subside in order to strengthen their position in an election, the Conservatives were to be embarrassed at the local political level by religious controversy and election scandal. From its creation in 1844, the Leeds Board of Guardians had been controlled by the Conservatives and, inevitably, they tended to be communicants of the Church of England. In January 1851, the Board appointed a paid chaplain to administer to the spiritual needs of the paupers in the workhouse. Four of those who voted for the motion were churchwardens. The Liberal minority opposed the appointment on the grounds that poor rates paid by Dissenters were being used to pay for the salary of a member of the established church.[25] In spite of a unanimous resolution to let the "dissenting" paupers know that they had a right to send for their own minister should they wish, the Board, at its meeting of 26 February, rejected an offer made by a group of protestant dissenting ministers to provide gratuitously religious services to the paupers on a rota basis. The Mercury took umbrage at the manner in which the "Tory Churchmen" on the Board had received the "representatives of the spiritual guides of one-half of the people of Leeds". The chairman of the Board had made a "Bumble-like" exclamation and the deputation of dissenting ministers had been "- a trio of idle paupers, - like Oliver Twist" (sic).[26] The Leeds Times warned that principles of religious freedom, equity, and equality were at stake and that the appointment was even more odious than a compulsory church rate.[27] In a letter to the editors of the Leeds Mercury a "Conservative Guardian" explained that the Board had felt it necessary to appoint a chaplain so that consistent religious services could be provided for the paupers. He rejected the charge being made by the Mercury that contracts for the workhouse had been decided on a political basis and he decried the allusions that party motives were the basis for actions taken by the Board. The source of "this objectionable practice . . . emanated from, and . . . (was) wholly confined to that portion of the members of the board who plume themselves on the title of 'Liberal'".[28]

There had been no contested Guardians' elections in 1849 and only one in the following year, but in 1851 four of the eight wards in the township were contested.[29] The Mercury denied that it was anxious to secure the election of Liberals to the Board merely because of their party affiliation but reminded the voters that several of the Tory Guardians had shown bigotry, exhibited recklessness in expenditures, and had issued contracts on the basis of party.[30] The Leeds Times recorded that the clerk to the Board had taken the unusual course of refusing to reveal the nominations in the contested wards to the newspapers.[31] The Mercury and the Times pointed out that previous elections had been marred by voting irregularities and identified the source of the problem as the individuals who were appointed to deliver and collect the voting papers. The Times urged that the Liberal ward committees watch those responsible for the distribution and collection to ensure that they did not "slink into the back parlours of quiet inns for the purpose of overhauling the voting papers".[32]

The election in 1851 resulted in a gain of one to the Liberal party but the Mercury decided that the issue of the conduct of the elections must be pursued. It charged that Leeds had had an unenviable reputation in connection with its elections of Poor Law Guardians and proceeded to detail the irregularities that had occurred in 1850 and 1851. In the latter election Frederick Baines, the brother of Edward, had obviously been unpleasantly surprised to find his name on the ballots for the Kirkgate ward. John Beckwith, clerk to the Board of Guardians, had not told him of his nomination and he finished at the bottom of the poll with only 29 votes.[33] It seems possible that the event stimulated Frederick Baines to assume a leading role in the public meeting which was held at the end of April. One suspects that the "small Tory pawnbroker" who had nominated Baines and another Liberal in order to split the Liberal vote had, in the final analysis, taken an action which was ultimately far more detrimental to his own party. The Mercury's publishers had a score to settle on both personal and political grounds. On 19 March, the newspaper published a letter from T.W. Tottie confirming the non-delivery of voting papers in the Mill Hill ward and supporting the newspaper's call for a memorial to the Poor Law Board or Parliament. The Liberal educationists and voluntaryists had found an issue upon which they could unite.

At a public meeting held on 30 April 1851, Frederick Baines introduced the memorial which was to be sent to the Poor Law Board. An investigation of the regulations that governed the election of Guardians was requested and it was suggested that the method of election should be similar to that used for electing town councillors. In November, the secretary of the Poor Law Board wrote to Darnton Lupton, who had acted as chairman of the public meeting. The Board had agreed that the property qualification of Guardians should be lowered to that necessary for election as a town councillor but disagreed that there was a need for an alteration in the method of the election of Guardians. The Board noted that malpractices in elections were punishable and that it was always ready to investigate charges of misconduct.[34] The memorialists were, it seems, being directed to put the Leeds situation in order by using existing legislation or the services of the Board. Matthew Talbot Baines had been President of the Poor Law Board since 1 January 1849, and although it is not suggested that he influenced unduly the response of the Board, he must have been aware of the situation in Leeds from the political perspective and it seems likely that his family would keep him informed too. Edward and Frederick were, at any event, disappointed with the Board's response and urged their readers to petition Parliament requesting legislation that would change the system of election.[35]

In April 1852, the elections for the ensuing year took place. Initially both sides expected that the Kirkgate, North and North West wards would be contested but no election was held in the last ward because the parties agreed to the withdrawal of a Conservative and two Liberal candidates leaving the field clear for each party to return one representative.[36]

Election campaigns in the other two wards were carried on vigorously and the Intelligencer predicted that the race would be close.[37] The Conservatives were returned in both wards and the organ of that party noted that they were elected by much larger majorities than it had been led to expect.[38] The Liberals in the Kirkgate ward reported that they could not understand how it was possible for their candidates to have received so few votes, while in the North ward the Liberal ward committee had assigned supporters to watch the collectors of the voting papers and suspicious activities had been noted. The large Tory filtering machine, it was claimed, had been at work again and the water had been declared Blue. The Leeds Times considered that as bad as the conduct had been in previous elections, the 1852 election was "likely to throw all others into the shade by its exhibition of reckless dishonesty and wilful tampering with the voting papers".[39]

At its first meeting after the election the Board of Guardians received a North ward Liberal deputation which requested that the voting papers for the ward be inspected by a deputation "from each party". The Board agreed that the papers should be made available and concluded its business for the day by making various appointments including that of Thomas Harrison, a Conservative member of the previous year's Board, as both its printer and stationer. It was not, however, a clear case of the spoils being distributed on a party basis since Harrison was proposed for both appointments by one of the Liberal Guardians. Three of the other seven appointments were also proposed by the Liberals.[40] The non-election in the North West ward and the division of spoils suggest that a pragmatic approach to politics was adopted at times and took place on this occasion even though the election was a sensitive one for both parties.

The North ward Liberals, accompanied by Thomas Morgan, the Reform Registration Association agent for Leeds and the West Riding, met the clerk to the Board for the purpose of examining the election returns. John Beckwith, the clerk, refused to produce the claims of the owners of property nor would he allow the Liberal agent to examine the voting papers in detail. He did, however, provide a copy of his schedule of the votes received from the various divisions in the ward and it appeared that only 384 of 522 voting papers which had been distributed were returned. Beckwith admitted that between one quarter and one third of those which had been returned were defaced; he had allocated those returns to the Liberals or the Conservatives according to his judgement![41] Understandably the Liberal press, which had praised Beckwith's willingness to provide information upon the release of the votes two weeks earlier, changed their opinion of him.[42]

At its meeting of 5 May the Board resolved to allow a thorough investigation of the returns for the Kirkgate and North wards. The motion was passed by four votes to three with seven abstentions. During the early part of the following week the Leeds Times reported that there had been "considerable activity . . . observable amongst a portion of the Tory Guardians, and certain followers of the Tory party - men who are found very useful when dirty work is to be done".[43] The result of the activity was the formation of a Tory deputation which appeared before the Board on 12 May, apparently representing the North and Kirkgate wards, with a request to examine the voting papers. The purpose of the request was obviously to give an opportunity for the Conservative Guardians to prevent the examination of the Kirkgate ward voting papers. On the previous Saturday the irregularities in the

North ward election had been exposed and in an attempt to guard against further revelations the Guardians refused to make any more voting papers available; in effect rescinding their resolution of 5 May. The Leeds Times thundered that the issue was "not a question of Liberal against Tory, but of honesty against roguery". It reported that both Liberals and Conservatives had signed a requisition which requested the Alderman of the Kirkgate ward to call a ward meeting to consider the subject.[44]

A Board meeting on the 19 May confirmed a split in the ranks of the Conservative Guardians. Peter L. Atkinson concluded that the decision of the Board, which resulted in a halt to the inquiry in the Kirkgate ward was "a dirty and disgraceful thing". Atkinson had been nominated as vice-chairman of the Board for the year 1852-53 by a Liberal but had declined the honour and had insinuated that Richard Stead, another Conservative, had canvassed for the position.[45] Therefore, he may have had personal rather than purely altruistic motives for this course of action. He had thought that the resolution passed by the Board the previous week would allow the inquiry into Kirkgate voting procedures and that it had been passed merely to prevent additional enquiries emanating from other groups. William Clarke, another Conservative Guardian, believed that the Liberal deputations merely came to annoy the Board for the purpose of arousing feelings against the Guardians for electioneering purposes. He noted that one person had observed that "this was a very nice thing for the coming election, it being got up merely as a sort of furor, to throw odium at the Conservative Guardians". Both Liberal Guardians somewhat cynically objected to the issue becoming a party question and denied that it was being used as a stalking horse for the election.[46] However, it is clear that the Kirkgate and North ward elections had become a significant issue for the Liberal party and, in spite of the denials by the two Liberal Guardians, it was being pursued for all the political advantage that could be gained. The Mercury also denied that the matter was a political or party question and claimed that the dissatisfaction over the elections was expressed by both Liberals and Conservatives. Nevertheless, it reported that a meeting of the leading gentlemen resident in each of the eight wards of the township had been held in the Liberal registration office on 24 May, and it was not suggested that Conservatives were present.[47] The Kirkgate deputation which appeared before the Board on 19 May and sent a letter to its meeting of 26 May consisted entirely of Liberals.[48]

The result of the election furor was that the Poor Law Board received three memorials - two from ratepayers in the contested wards and one from the Board of Guardians - requesting an official investigation. The Guardians had decided to send a memorial to the Poor Law Board at a meeting of 19 May but the vote had been close with the Chairman breaking a tie.

In the same column that it anticipated the parliamentary election of 1852, the Mercury reported that both Liberal and Conservative ratepayers of the North ward had attended a meeting on 24 June and the latter had been "equally indignant with the former at the manner in which their votes had been tampered with". It was also noted that one of the Conservative Guardians who resided in the ward had been surprised to discover that his voting papers had been changed. Perversely, he had cast his votes in favour of the Liberal candidates yet he was recorded as having voted for the Conservative candidates.[49] The Mercury was evidently intent on sowing confusion in the ranks of the Conservatives for the upcoming borough election.

The Inquiry opened on 26 June, and after one week of testimony which had been confined to the irregularities in the North ward, the Intelligencer could only classify them as incredible and acknowledge that the extent of the tampering had been great. It was content to lay the blame on some of the collectors of the voting papers and claimed that neither Liberals nor Conservatives believed that the Clerk to the Guardians would have condoned the frauds.[50] On the first day of the Inquiry, Poor Law Inspector H.B. Farnall had declared that he had seen a great number of queer electioneering proceedings, but that he had never seen so gross a situation as that under investigation. After four days of testimony the Poor Law Inspector adjourned the Inquiry on 1 July due to the parliamentary election, which was to be held the following week, and he announced that the investigation would be resumed after the election. During the four days, full details of the forgery, disfigurement and destruction of Liberal voting papers could only fan the Liberal enthusiasm for the parliamentary election and without doubt caused the Conservatives some concern.

The Conservative controlled Board of Guardians had provided two ready-made issues that helped to reunite the Liberal party; the appointment of a paid chaplain to the workhouse and the corruption exhibited by the Inquiry. The former helped to restore unity on the basis of religious belief. A united dissenting group was essential for the Liberal party since the majority of its leaders, and probably supporters, belonged to one or other of the non-conformist denominations. The scandal surrounding the elections for the Board had been simmering for some years and, after a false start in 1851, finally became a predominant local issue during the weeks prior to the election and a significant feature of the election period. For all intents and purposes the Inquiry encompassed the election and provided a stimulus for Liberal organization. These revelations probably had a significant impact on the Conservative response to the parliamentary election. Moreover, some Conservatives became concerned about the tactics that had produced victory in the Guardians' elections and the lethargic response exhibited by the Conservatives in their preparations for the parliamentary elections may be explained, to some extent, by the demoralizing impact of such blatant interference with the voting papers for the poor law elections. The wards which were used as the basis for municipal and poor law elections in Leeds township were also used for parliamentary elections. The focus for organization was the same whether the election was to decide upon the membership of the town council, the Board of Guardians or the House of Commons. Wounds sustained in one battle could be carried forward to the next. In normal circumstances the length of time that passed between the poor law elections of April and a parliamentary election in July might have been sufficient to allow a healing process. The continued attention that was directed towards the scandal prevented it.

III

Although the movement for parliamentary reform in the 1850s and early 1860s failed, the simple act of organization for that end helped in the reunification of the Leeds Liberals. In January 1852, the

Mercury reported that "Liberals of every shade" had met to consider what should be done to encourage the Government to introduce an extensive measure of reform.[51] The Intelligencer found it incongruous that the "secret conclave of 'Liberals'" had planned a public meeting at which resolutions would be proposed with the distinct understanding that no amendments should be moved.[52] The aim of such an announcement by the "Liberals of every shade" was, of course, to ensure a united front. Not all of them were agreed upon every aspect of reform and the most contentious issue was that of the extension of the franchise.

While Edward Baines supported the majority of the resolutions which were agreed upon at the Manchester Reform Conference of 3 December 1851, he had reservations about the extension of the franchise. Baines had accepted that the redistribution of seats, the ballot, triennial parliaments and the abolition of property qualifications for members of Parliament were necessary. He was not prepared to support universal suffrage and explained

> The franchise is no boon to the man who is not qualified to exercise it . . . there are yet ignorant classes . . . there are large numbers constantly on the brink of pauperism, intemperate, improvident . . . never reading a book or newspaper . . . knowing nothing of politics and caring nothing for them . . .

Baines was quite willing to make the parliamentary franchise equal to that upon which town councillors were elected and he was satisfied that a reduction in the residence qualification used for municipal elections could be tolerated since the number of electors in Leeds would be increased only by 3,300 to make the total 19,000.[53]

A meeting of the Parliamentary Reform Association was held in Leeds two days after the Manchester Conference and a major item in the

Association's platform was household suffrage. Baines, who did not attend, had grounds for disagreement with the Association other than those connected with the franchise question. In an editorial in October 1851, he had criticized the activities of the Association in a bye-election that was underway in the neighbouring town of Bradford. The Mercury supported the nomination of Robert Milligan, whom it described as "much more than a Whig, though something less than a Radical". It noted that Bradford's Chartists and extreme Radicals had held aloof from the nomination and it condemned the president of the National Reform Association, Sir Joshua Walmsley, for interfering with the selection process of Bradford Liberals and for his attempt to push forward the nomination of someone more acceptable to himself. Furthermore, Walmsley's activities were denounced as manifesting an intolerant and dividing spirit among Reformers which threatened serious consequences if it were to continue. It is evident that for the Mercury the Association's activities could have had implications for politics beyond Bradford's boundaries.[54]

The leading Liberals of Leeds did not attend the Parliamentary Reform Association's meeting which had been called in order to allow a deputation from the National Reform Association a platform on the reform issue and an opportunity to recruit members. It was chaired by Councillor R.M. Carter, a Chartist, and Councillor Robson, another leading Chartist was also present. Thomas Morgan, the Reform Registration Agent, attended and towards the end of the meeting he felt compelled to repeat the explanation for the absence of the "leading Liberals" given earlier in the meeting by Councillor Carter. Their absence was unavoidable because, it was asserted, they were planning another meeting which would also address parliamentary reform!

If the Liberals were also meeting on 5 December they must have recognised the necessity for including the leading chartists and radicals in any planning if unity were to be preserved. Councillor Robson and David Green were present at a planning meeting on 9 January 1852. The latter, a radical, had attended the Parliamentary Reform Association's meeting and had said that he anticipated a close union of the middle and working classes in the agitation for parliamentary reform.

The Mercury presented a brief summary of the Association's meeting and leaves the impression that the two principal speakers, Sir Joshua Walmsley and George Thompson M.P., had urged all parties in Leeds to unite.[55] The more detailed report in the Leeds Times shows that Sir Joshua Walmsley disagreed with the absent Baines on three points. The president of the Association called for annual Parliaments and household suffrage, and he advised the audience that it must not fear "that stalking horse of some persons - a division of the Liberal party". Those, he went on, who "would not give others what they themselves possessed . . . were not of the Liberal party". One member of the audience took up that issue and claimed that the Whig party were the greatest enemies that the radicals of Leeds had. He complained that whenever a really good candidate was brought out, the Whigs prevented his nomination by claiming that his candidature would divide the Liberal interest.[56]

It is impossible to determine the reason for the delay between the meeting of "leading Liberals" on or about 5 December 1851, and the meeting of the "Liberals of every shade" on 9 January 1852. Possibly all groups were awaiting an indication of Government plans from Lord John Russell. In late December, the Mercury reported that the prime minister had declined to meet the deputation appointed at the Manchester reform conference and it urged reformers to prepare petitions and memorials. Baines warned that a great error would be committed if the reformers were waiting to take action after the Government had introduced legislation. It was necessary to avoid giving an impression of public apathy or, he predicted prophetically, an opportunity would be missed that might not recur for twenty or thirty years.[57] The hesitancy on the part of Russell provided Baines with a platform upon which he could rally the different sections of the party. Instead of being put into a position of arguing for or against various details of reform, which would have been the case if Russell's Government had introduced a bill, the Liberals of Leeds could unite beneath a banner which urged the necessity of parliamentary reform in general terms.

The general meeting, which was arranged by the Liberals, took place on 20 January 1852, but it was not crowded. The Liberal member for the borough, J.G. Marshall, attended and he related that he had always voted for Joseph Hume's motion for household suffrage, triennial Parliaments, vote by ballot, and the redistribution of seats. Edward Baines seconded a resolution proposed by Marshall which was couched in the most general terms and, in the course of his speech, the editor of the Mercury conceded that he did not attach any great importance to the residence qualification which would be required for voters. His main objective was to extend the franchise in a series of steps but he wished to exclude "those classes from it, whom it was not desirable to entrust with a vote".[58] David Green, the radical bookseller and printer, argued for universal suffrage on the basis of its being a right not a privilege. While he did not deny the virtue or intelligence of the middle classes - whom he labelled "God's aristocracy" - he demanded universal suffrage in order to remove the injustice of disfranchisement. Yet even Green tempered his demands and would "accept with thankfulness the household suffrage now offered them by the middle classes". However, not all those who attended were as willing to maintain unity at all costs. An attempt was made to introduce an amendment advocating universal suffrage.[59] A show of hands was called for to decide whether the amendment should be delayed until the latter part of the meeting and the result was so close that the chairman was unable to determine which course of action should be taken. Edward Baines was the first to speak after the chairman's comment and he urged the meeting to refrain from pressing the amendment since it contradicted the resolution; it was a violation of what had been agreed between himself and the others on the platform; and union was necessary to enable them to carry out their project with success.

A second vote on the amendment was very close and, in the opinion of the Leeds Times, was carried. The chairman, however, declared that it was lost. The Times noted that some universal suffragists had voted against the motion in order to avoid what might seem to be a division in the Liberal party. Councillor Carter avowed himself a supporter of universal suffrage but called upon all to unite to secure parliamentary reform. William Brook, another Chartist, also urged unanimity. He reminded the audience that

> As working men, they had no longer that organization which commanded attention, and could compel their voice to be listened to, and their rights to be given them. If, then, they had no longer that power themselves, it was incumbent upon them to go with those who had it.

Brook called the attention of the meeting to the next election, warned that the Conservatives were preparing to field two candidates if a split in the Reformers rank were discerned, and advocated J.G. Marshall and Joseph Sturge as the Liberal candidates.[60] The Leeds Times endorsed the call for unity and hoped that "a happier choice of candidates" would enable the party to avoid the damaging divisions in the reformers' ranks during the previous election.[61]

The Reform Bill which Russell introduced in early February failed to meet all the points of the Manchester resolutions since the ballot and a reduction in the length of Parliaments were not mentioned, but as the Mercury was quick to point out, the determination of the Tories to oppose the bill would naturally increase its attractiveness in the eyes of Reformers. Russell's government was defeated on the Militia Bill later in the month and any divisions which might have emerged among the Leeds Liberals were prevented too.

IV

If Baines had reduced the conflict within his party on the education question by avoiding its discussion and had managed to keep it united on the issue of parliamentary reform, the resolution which he was to move at a meeting on 4 March was one upon which he need fear no dissension or inopportune amendments. The ambiguous comments which had emerged from the Derby Government on the matter of free trade were a godsend to urban Liberals who were seeking unreserved unity amongst all sections of their party. It is possible that the Corn Law bogey was revived enthusiastically for two major reasons. In the first place the Derby Government had not really offended or inspired the country and, secondly, Russell's stock in the Liberal party was low. The Liberals needed an issue upon which they could focus the attention of the electorate. Furthermore, free trade had heralded a period of prosperity which appeared to be shared by most, thus confounding the predictions of the Chartists that lower food prices would lead to a reduction in wages. In 1850, the radical Leeds Times had pointed out that since the repeal of the Corn Laws a shilling would go as far as one shilling and six pence had done.[62] The various groups which made up an urban Liberal party could coalesce under the free trade umbrella and use it to convince themselves that the victory resulting from such united action would enable them to pursue parliamentary reform. By using free trade in that manner the Liberals carefully avoided the need to engage in discussion about details in the other area.

Leeds Liberals demonstrated that they were able to generate a large crowd in favour of free trade at a meeting held on 4 March 1852. The Liberal press noted that it had been called upon only twenty-four hours notice and that thousands were unable to get into the meeting hall.[63] Sir George Goodman, the mayor, who had declined to preside at the meeting of the Parliamentary Reform Association of 5 December 1851 on the grounds that the chief magistrate should not mix actively in politics, evidently recognized no political implications in accepting the chair at the free trade meeting.[64] Goodman, who was to be one of the Liberal candidates in the general election, was certainly not reticent about drawing the attention of the audience to Lord Derby as the source of the state of distrust and apprehension which, he claimed, was prevalent in the country. Richard Cobden, the Liberal member for the West Riding, noted that he had decided to retire from its representation only two weeks prior to the installation of the Derby Cabinet. A protectionist government made it necessary for him to throw down his gauntlet in the Riding once more. He wanted the working classes to feel that they had contributed to "this last struggle" and said that the repeal of the corn laws and free trade had enabled them to be in a condition to strike or to battle for a share in the representative system of the country.

Edward Baines pointed out that if the battle for free trade were to be fought again the advantages would include a disunited Conservative party and a united Liberal party in which the Whigs would also be free trade supporters. He took up Cobden's theme of unity with the working classes and suggested that their support of free trade was a more important factor than the other factors favourable to the free trade cause. Baines moved the resolution which urged the election committees of Leeds and the West Riding to take immediate measures to secure the return of free trade Members. The start of the election campaign was thus identified with the revival of the Leeds Anti-Corn-Law Association.

V

Some of the Leeds Liberals had been planning their election strategy for the borough from 27 January 1852. A meeting of Reformers from various parts of the borough was held in the Dusty Miller Inn, at which it had been thought very desirable that candidates should be mentioned immediately and not deferred until the eleventh hour. Large majorities favoured Joseph Sturge and J.G. Marshall and because it was believed that a general election was imminent it was agreed that an election committee would meet every Tuesday evening.[65] The collapse of the Russell ministry on 20 February increased the level of activity of the Leeds Liberals and during the week that followed it became evident that not all of them had concurred with the proceedings of the previous month at the Dusty Miller Inn. The first of a series of "preliminary and private meetings" was held at the Reform Registration Rooms on Monday 23 February and favoured Marshall and Alderman Carbutt as the Liberal candidates.[66] On Wednesday another gathering of electors and non-electors met at the Dusty Miller and once again nominated Sturge and Marshall.

The next day at a meeting in the Griffin Inn, William Brook charged that the nomination of Carbutt would not result in his election and would therefore be playing into the hands of the Tories.[67] He had attended the meetings at which Sturge and Marshall had been nominated and indicated his displeasure at other nomination meetings to which all Liberals had not been invited. Baines claimed that the Dusty Miller meetings could be considered as being as exclusive as those of the Reform Registration Society.[68] He felt that Sturge would be less likely to succeed as a candidate than a townsman and suggested that Sturge, as a Quaker, would not hold popular opinions on a topic like the peace question. Sir George Goodman, Joseph Hume and Baines himself were also mentioned as possible candidates. The outcome of the meeting was an agreement to call another meeting of Liberal electors for the following Monday. It was noted that it should consist "solely of electors, as their votes must determine the ultimate result in a contested election, but that the wishes and feelings of the non-electors should also be consulted on the subject".[69]

In order to restore unity officially, the Liberal electors who voted for J.G. Marshall in the election of 1847, held a meeting on Friday 27 February at which Darnton Lupton announced:

> that the other party had signified their desire to . . . (vote) for the candidate which the National Education party among the Liberals shall choose; and he trusted that that meeting would reciprocate the friendly feeling by resolving to support the man whom the Voluntary Educationists should propose to them.

A deputation was to communicate with J.G. Marshall to ascertain whether he would stand for re-election.[70] While the *Mercury* was quite willing to accept Marshall in harness with Carbutt, the *Leeds Times* was reluctant to support the latter and referred to the need to avoid having the favourite of a coterie or a particular section of the party as a candidate.

While the Liberals were attempting to set their house in order, the same could not be said of the Leeds Conservatives. The *Leeds Intelligencer* noted the preparatory work being undertaken by the Liberals but regarded the exercise premature for Conservatives since an election was not necessarily imminent. In addition the newspaper mentioned, merely so that it could deny, a report that William Beckett would not stand for re-election.[71] The *Intelligencer* may have felt a brief sense of satisfaction by the end of the following week because the dissension in the Liberal ranks remained. Those who favoured Sturge as a candidate to represent their advocacy of manhood suffrage were being rivalled by the supporters of household suffrage who sought Sir George Goodman as their champion. Each group preferred that its candidate stand for election with J.G. Marshall. On 1 March, a letter was received from Sturge declining the nomination, and the meeting of Liberal electors called for on the same evening was to be a contest between the supporters of Carbutt and Goodman. The Times reported that among the placards posted on Saturday and Monday was one referring to the education issue but noted that both Voluntaryists and National education supporters had agreed to make it a "dropped question".[72]

The reports of the meeting of Liberal electors record that Baines' nomination of Carbutt was greeted with vocal dissent and William Brook succeeded in nominating Goodman in spite of the fact that Goodman's brother read a letter in which the mayor declined the honour. Only one third of those present raised their hands in favour of Carbutt.[73] Baines and the Reform Registration Association had been defeated in their choice but just before the meeting ended Baines announced that the first meeting of the election committee would be held at the Association's Office the following morning. One suspects that Baines was anxious to prevent matters from slipping completely out of his grasp. At any event the candidate who had been reluctant to serve accepted the nomination and the serving member, Marshall, declined to seek re-election. The reason given by Marshall for his retirement from politics was that he was concerned about both his health and his inattention to private and family matters. The private and family reasons appear to have been paramount and the family firm had passed through a two-year period of heavy trading losses.[74] Marshall also acknowledged that he had not taken as active a part in parliamentary duty as he had hoped.[75]

His personality probably also played a part in determining this retreat from Parliament; he has been described as being unable to persevere, unwilling to put everything into his business and neglectful of details.[76] Those characteristics would not endear him to the electors of Leeds and could well have been in the mind of the person who attended the Liberal electors meeting and called out that Marshall was "half a Tory".[77] Francis Carbutt declined to allow his name to stand for nomination again and the members of the Reform Registration Association met several times during the early part of the second week of March.[78]

The Intelligencer, trying to make political capital out of the haste with which the Liberals were proceeding, suggested that it was done to steal a march on those who met and concocted their schemes at the Dusty Miller![79] Indeed, a number of the "friends of popular freedom" met as late as 2 July to propose Samuel Kydd of London as a likely candidate and Kydd's name was shouted from the crowd on nomination day.[80] There was, however, a majority of Liberal electors who favoured the selection of Matthew Talbot Baines as the second Liberal candidate. Baines, who in 1849 had determined that he would not seek re-election for Hull, had confirmed his decision in a letter to his constituents on 25 February 1851.[81] The Mercury denied any connection with the selection, pointing out the strong support it had given to Carbutt and the fact that on one or two points the political opinions of the editors did not coincide with those of their brother.[82] At the Election Committee meeting of 12 March, Edward Baines was called upon to present his brother's opinions from the private correspondence which he had received. The extracts from the letters revealed that the eldest of the

Baines brothers, who was an Anglican, did not support the ballot, had opposed the repeal of the Navigation Acts, and favoured Government attempts to improve education.[83] The Liberal electors confirmed their unanimous support for Sir George Goodman and M.T. Baines at a meeting on 6 March. While the Leeds Liberals may have been satisfied with their choices John Bright was less enthusiastic. In a letter to Edward Baines he suggested that it would be impossible to form any Liberal government without an understanding that the ballot would be introduced. He urged that Leeds should not "speak with an uncertain voice on the next great question".[84]

On the day that the Liberals selected their candidates, William Beckett published a brief address to the electors of Leeds claiming that he would pay his respects to the electorate for the purpose of seeking re-election "at the proper time". He made it clear that he would continue to support free trade.[85] As the Mercury pointed out, it was significant that Beckett refrained from referring to any political question but free trade. The Intelligencer, naturally, tried to boost the Conservative position by drawing attention to Beckett's position on the matter. It denied a suggestion made by the Daily News that there was some doubt whether Beckett would really offer his services to the constituency.[86] With Beckett's stance on free trade the Liberal organs had to emphasize the fact that the Liberal candidates favoured parliamentary reform too. The Times warned that it would be extreme folly to split votes between either of the Liberal candidates and Beckett. The Mercury, which had declared on 13 March that questions other than free trade could be laid aside had changed its mind two weeks later and decided that free trade and parliamentary reform were to be the two great issues at the election and that neither question should be forgotten.[87]

The Liberal candidates met the electors from their party at a meeting on 22 March. M.T. Baines was subjected to all the questioning; on topics as varied as the ballot, the separation of Church and State, the presence of bishops in the House of Lords, the Militia Bill, and capital punishment. Three of the four whose questions are recorded must have been satisfied with the answers they received because they subsequently voted for both Liberal candidates.[88] James L. Ward, a surgeon, attempted to move an amendment denying that Baines was a worthy candidate since he would not give his support for the ballot. The amendment was shouted down and Ward does not appear to have voted in the election.

Meanwhile, the editor of the Intelligencer continued to adopt a relaxed attitude towards the approaching election and suggested that the event was not quite so close at hand as the activities of the Liberals of Leeds would indicate. A lack of action on Beckett's part was therefore deemed to be no cause to excite surprise especially since he had been appointed chairman of the Committee of Inquiry into the water supply of London, which took up a great deal of his time. The Intelligencer fended off the Mercury's accusations that Beckett had absented himself from Parliament frequently and noted that considerable effort was being made to persuade the electors of Leeds that he was unlikely to stand for election.[89] Three days after the editorial, Beckett's decision to retire from Leeds became known and the Intelligencer castigated the Conservatives in the borough for their apathy and inactivity.

The Mercury suggested that Beckett had assessed the Liberal strength on the register of electors and had withdrawn when he saw that the party was united behind its candidates. It also reported that "influential men of the Protectionist party" had told Beckett that they would oppose him in the event of a poll. The Intelligencer acknowledged that some difference of opinion existed within the Conservative party on free trade but pointed to differences in theological opinions as causing a more serious division. The differences between the High Church and Low Church, it confessed,

> have assumed a character that renders the first steps for organising a combined party movement very difficult. Hence, probably, arises the apparent apathy with which the Conservatives of Leeds have been suffering their political adversaries to advance unopposed in their electioneering proceedings.[90]

The Intelligencer felt that Beckett was unjustified in withdrawing if his decision was based on information about the requisition being signed for M.T. Baines and Goodman. On the day that Beckett indicated his intention not to seek re-election, the newspaper reported that 1,500 electors had signed the requisition for them which, it claimed, probably represented about one-third of those who might be expected to vote.[91] The Conservative organ suggested that any who had signed since that date had been "trimmers and waverers" who had swelled the lists because it appeared that there would be no opposition to the Liberals. The Intelligencer refused to accept Beckett's retirement from the borough, tried to ignore the fact that he had issued an Address to the electors of Ripon and urged a canvass of the electors on his behalf.

The following week the Intelligencer conceded that the members of the party which it supported had neglected the Register of electors but suggested that tardiness of movement was not an unusual characteristic of Leeds Conservatives. The register, it was agreed by both parties, had been revised to the advantage of the Liberals. At the borough revision of 1851, which was to determine the electoral register for 1852, the Liberals had had a clear gain of 147 voters. One year before the net Liberal gain had been 148. When Baines had acknowledged Carbutt's efforts to ensure the presence of a majority of Liberals in the Riding and borough registers it had not been idle rhetoric. However, it had been at least three years since the Conservatives had made a stand at the registration court and they had had no representative there at all for at least two years.[92] Nevertheless, it must have been disconcerting for the Liberals, and encouraging for the Conservatives, to recall that the municipal elections of November 1851 had confounded all predictions in two wards. A majority on the register for a party did not necessarily translate into a victory for it at the poll.[93]

The Liberal election committee decided to complete the canvass on behalf of their candidates in order to demonstrate the impossible position that any opposing candidate would face. The Mercury claimed that 2081 signatures had been collected for both Baines and Goodman and a further 560 promises for Baines and 602 promises for Goodman. The combination of signatures and promises, it was pointed out, exceeded the number of electors who had polled for any candidate in a Leeds borough election. Even without reducing the total of 5,132 eligible voters to take into account the "few hundreds who resolutely abstain from voting" the Mercury noted that any candidates who received the promises of more than 2,600 electors would have a clear majority.[94]

The Conservatives held their first organizational meeting 20 April 1852. The private meeting, with J.R. Atkinson acting as chairman, decided that an effort should be made to show that there was a general feeling among the electors in favour of the re-election of Beckett. The party machinery was in such a deplorable state that the only record which existed for canvassers was the pollbook published for the election of 1847.[95] In a borough like Leeds constant attention to the process of registration was required. It was estimated that between the general election of 1841 and that held six years later one third of the electoral group had changed. It was expected that one quarter of those who were placed on the register in 1851 would not have voted in a parliamentary election in Leeds before. The calculations excluded those who had merely moved from one part of the borough to another.[96] The Conservatives not only lacked adequate records but also seem to have had difficulty in finding leaders. The Liberal press revealed that the second organizational meeting arranged by their adversaries was marked by the absence of those who were usually the leaders.[97] In February it had been rumoured that John Gott, a woollen manufacturer and merchant whose family was a pillar of the Conservative establishment, would stand for election in the borough but he was noticeably absent from organizational meetings.[98]

In an attempt to boost morale the Leeds Intelligencer claimed that if the Conservatives were divided in 1852 they were no more divided than in 1847; if there had been neglect of the registration of electors it was the fault of the Overseers; and the result of the canvass being carried out in favour of Mr. Beckett would determine whether he would place his services at the disposal of his old constituency![99]

The Conservative organ was prepared to go to great lengths to rally the party but it was to no avail. On 1 May, Beckett explained to the electors of Ripon that his withdrawal from the Leeds contest was based upon the lack of activity on his behalf at a time when the Liberals were organizing on behalf of their candidates. Two weeks later the Intelligencer asked Beckett to reconsider his commitment to Ripon and reported on 22 May that 1,942 electors had signed an address to him. Beckett told the deputation which went to London to present the address that he would not accept the invitation to stand as a candidate in Leeds.[100]

The names of Robert Hall, Alderman Sidney and J.S. Wortley were mentioned as possible Conservative candidates during a stormy Conservative party meeting on 27 May. The Intelligencer concluded that the "political history of Leeds for the last three months would form a curious chapter of electioneering memorabilia".[101]

The month of June marked an hiatus in election activity in Leeds. The Conservatives appeared to have lost any momentum that they had generated in their canvass for Beckett, and the Intelligencer urged the party to organize for the forthcoming registration (which would not have any impact on the election in 1852), to commission a registration agent, to establish a Conservative Association and, in general, to prepare for the election which would follow the next one! By mid-June the newspaper conceded that the election might seem to be over with a "moral incubus" weighing down upon the party.[102]

The borough election was scheduled for 8 July. In its editorial of 3 July the Intelligencer mused that it would be the first uncontested election since the borough had received the parliamentary franchise because it was too late to expect Leeds Conservatives to take an active part in it. The newspaper, once again, urged that the Conservatives of the borough

> with manly dignified courage, immediately . . . buckle on their armour and prepare for the next contest, which may occur much sooner than is generally expected.[103]

If one credits the pronouncements of the Intelligencer as being an accurate reflection of its intelligence about Conservative strategy for the 1852 election, it must have been a surprise to its editor as well as to many others in the constituency when two Conservative candidates were nominated and a poll called for. Rumours had circulated from 5 July that the Conservatives were holding a series of secret meetings. Evidently few believed the rumours and the Liberals were taken by surprise when the Conservative nominations were made. When the show of hands was taken at the end of the meeting between one hundred and two hundred people indicated support for one of the Conservative candidates and thirty to sixty showed support for the other. Clearly, the Conservatives were badly organized for the nomination day crowd was estimated to be between eight thousand and fifteen thousand![104] The reaction of the Liberal press is of interest; the Times showed a grudging appreciation of the "coup" that was attempted while Baines cried foul and claimed that the most charitable view of the Conservatives' actions was that they exhibited vacillation, indiscretion and unfairness. The Mercury decried the costs forced upon the Liberal candidates by virtue of a poll being taken.[105]

The two Conservative candidates were Robert Hall and Alderman Sidney. Hall, who was born in the town, had served as mayor of Leeds as a member of the unreformed corporation on three occasions prior to his departure from the town in 1835. He had been one of Michael Sadler's most energetic supporters in the borough election of 1832 and had been the chairman of the Conservative candidate's election committee during the general election of 1835. After moving to London he had continued to maintain contact with Leeds because he was a lawyer on the Northern Circuit and, in 1842, he had been appointed deputy-recorder of the sessions court in Leeds. Furthermore, his father was a leader in the Leeds Conservative party and so Hall's political and local credentials were sound. Sidney, who was an alderman in London retained an interest in Leeds as a partner in a firm of tea, spice and coffee importers and in October 1851 had been proposed as a member of the Society for Promoting Improvements in the Borough of Leeds by Edward Baines![106] The Mercury made much of the fact that the Conservatives who were on the hustings were: a rent agent who was formerly a West Riding constable; a local political figure who had attempted, but had failed, to secure election to council on about a dozen occasions; a painter who was a leader of a group of "Operative Conservatives", and a barrister who was not even an elector.[107] Neither of the Conservative candidates were present at the nomination and Sidney did not appear during the election. When Hall appeared on the hustings on 9 July to hear the results, he confessed that forty-eight hours before he had had no idea of being a candidate in the election and was gratified that he had received so many votes. He avowed himself ready to come forward as a candidate again when called upon by the constituency of Leeds and he attended a party meeting on 26 July at which he addressed the question of organization and donated L100 toward the expenses that would be incurred in developing a registration movement.[108] In contrast, Sidney's post-election Address to the electors chastised the Conservatives for the poor results.[109]

Both parties claimed that they had difficulty in getting their supporters to the poll. Some Liberals felt that their votes were not needed in what seemed to be a foregone conclusion. The Conservatives also encountered lukewarm responses and apathy.[110] Only 3,451 voters of a registered electorate of 5,151 cast their votes and the turnout of 67.0 percent was significantly lower than that of the previous election when the poll had been 85.5 percent of registered electors.[111] Both the Liberal candidates polled somewhat higher than the 2,081 who signed the requisition to them. Some of those who had been in the category of promising to vote, but had not signed, probably lived up to their promises. On the other hand both Liberal candidates had approximately three hundred fewer votes than the total of those who had signed or promised at the time that the requisition had been prepared. This confirms the suggestions made in the Leeds Times about the difficulty of getting some Liberals to the polls. The poll for the Conservative candidates is a clear indication of the reluctance of voters to turn out for those candidates.

The result of the poll in the borough election was:

Sir George Goodman	2,344
M.T. Baines	2,311
R. Hall	1,132
T. Sidney	1,089

The difference between the votes received by Goodman and those which went to Baines is accounted for partly by twenty-five Roman

Catholic voters who plumped for the former because they resented Baines' vote for the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill.[112] The 1,212 votes which separated those cast for the leading Liberal and those cast for the leading Conservative indicates the nadir to which Conservative fortunes had descended. None of the other elections held in the period 1832-65 showed such a marked difference; the next highest was that for the 1832 election when 416 votes separated the leading contender of each party.

Each election is, of course, unique but the 1852 parliamentary election in Leeds exhibited characteristics that made it especially noteworthy. Those who considered themselves reformers and usually voted for Liberal candidates were reunited in the 1852 election. The education question, which had been the cause of the division in the Leeds Liberal party in 1847 was not suppressed completely as a topic in 1852 but it was far from being a major issue.[113] Edward Baines had taken the matter to the people of Leeds and had been defeated. Francis Carbutt, his nominee as a Liberal candidate who was a strong supporter of Voluntaryism did not gain the nomination. Baines must have understood that his voluntaryist views would have to be his own and could not be part of the platform of any Liberal candidate if victory at the polls were to be ensured. The free trade issue was used skilfully; the benefits following the repeal of the corn laws and subsequent free trade measures were brought to the attention of the working classes. Free trade was made the base upon which the middle and working classes could unite for the furtherance of parliamentary reform. Since the Leeds Liberals adopted many of the items of the Charter the Chartists could console themselves that although they lacked an effective organization they could achieve much by uniting with the middle-class reformers. Finally, the actions of the Guardians had produced two additional areas upon which the Liberals could re-establish unity; dissent was reunited by the workhouse chaplaincy issue and the election scandal provided a stimulus for the Liberal political machinery to be brought to a high level of readiness.

The Conservatives forfeited their chances for re-election by neglecting the registration of their supporters, by mishandling the Guardians' elections and the chaplaincy question and by failing to organize early enough to retain Beckett as a candidate. It seems unlikely, though, that earlier organization of replacement candidates would have resulted in a victory for them. While dissent was uniting behind the Liberals, the doctrinal divisions in the Church of England were causing a split in the Conservative ranks. Beckett's commitment to free trade had alienated some of the Conservatives and seems to have caused a further division in the party. The Conservatives lacked an effective leadership and that was also an important factor in their failure in 1852. In addition, the absence of John Gott has been noted, as has the calibre of the Conservatives who nominated their party's candidates on the hustings.

Nevertheless, while the party lacked leadership from its usual sources, it was organized to some extent - otherwise it would be difficult to explain the 1,942 signatures on the petition to Beckett and the bands, placards and other activity for the Conservatives on polling day. The Operative Conservative Society, which had disbanded in 1843, had been revived in name if not in exactly the same mould in January 1852.[114] On 26 January, the Operative Conservatives were vocal during a meeting of the British Anti-State Church Association. By February there had been activity to organize the wards and one month later the Society had raised enough support to cause an uproar at the annual meeting to appoint the Highway Surveyors. The three hours which the meeting lasted were spent in trying to elect someone to chair the proceedings![115] The purpose of the Society's activities was to get a slate of Conservative candidates elected to replace the Chartist dominated Board but the candidates on the Conservative list were defeated soundly. In effect, the Conservative effort had helped to reinforce the unity between Chartists and Liberals. In April, the Conservative list of Churchwardens was adopted at the annual vestry meeting because it had been held at 10:00 a.m. rather than the normal time of noon. The Leeds Times suggested that the 'Operative Conservative' Churchwardens were responsible for the strategy and that it had been done to avoid a clash with the Chartists who were eager to disrupt the meeting as revenge for Operative Conservative activity at the Highway Surveyors' meeting.[116]

William Clarke, who had lectured at one of the first meetings of the Society, was identified as an Operative Conservative by the Leeds Times and appeared as an assistant to the solicitor for the Board of Guardians during the inquiry into the election scandal.[117] It is evident that political activity was maintained for the Conservatives during the first half of 1852 by the Operative Conservative Society and it is possible that its members may have been involved in the illegal activities during the Guardians' elections. If any of the more principled Conservative leaders had supported the rebirth of the Society it is unlikely that their support survived the débâcle of the election for the Board of Guardians. While the Operative Conservatives might have filled a vacuum in the party organization it is doubtful that the Conservative party could have expected any lasting benefit. "Operatives", after all, did not normally have a vote and there is no reason to doubt that Conservatives in Leeds still expected their leadership to be drawn from the higher levels of Leeds society rather than from the middle or lower strata.[118]

[1] Fraser, "Politics in Leeds 1830-52," p. 378.

[2] Joseph Sturge, a Birmingham Quaker, had also been a leader in the anti-slavery movement. When Sturge died in 1859, the Leeds Mercury noted that he had been selected as a candidate because of his opposition to the state endowment of education and in spite of his "extreme opinions" on the suffrage question. 17 May 1859.

[3] Fraser, "Politics in Leeds 1830-52," p. 393.

[4] E.P. Hennock, Fit and Proper Persons, (Montreal: McGill - Queen's University Press; 1973) p. 200.

[5] Baines, Life of Baines, p. 282.

[6] Ibid., p. 287.

[7] Leeds Mercury, 2 March 1850. The Times wanted to know in what respect national education was more communistic than the poor law. It had previously designated national education as "peculiarly the question of working men". Leeds Times, 5 January, 9 March 1850.

[8] Ibid., 9 March, 16 March 1850.

[9] The composition of the two Liberal Election Committees for the 1847 election has been recorded by D. Fraser, "Politics in Leeds 1830-52," p. 382.

[10] Leeds Intelligencer, 13 April 1850.

[11] Leeds Mercury, 13 April 1850.

[12] Leeds Intelligencer, 20 April 1850.

[13] Ibid.

[14] In 1851, 13,000 children attended 'public' schools and 9,000 attended dame or other private schools. W.B. Stephens has pointed out that Leeds, with a strong Dissenting population, had a higher proportion of its population attending Anglican schools than London, Manchester, Liverpool or Birmingham. W.B. Stephens, "Elementary Education and Literacy, 1770-1870," in A History of Modern Leeds, ed. Derek Fraser, p. 231.

[15] Smiles was editor of the Leeds Times from 1838-42, practised medicine in Holbeck 1842-45 and was secretary of the Leeds and Thirsk railway 1845-54. He left Leeds in 1854. For Smiles see Andrew Weir, "Samuel Smiles," University of Leeds Review, 3 (1952-53): 215-223.

[16] *Leeds Intelligencer*, 20 April 1850.

[17] *Leeds Mercury*, 20 April 1850. Baines complained that Barker and Smiles had spoken for one and a half and one and a quarter hours in order to enable the working classes to attend the meeting and cast their vote. He accused the two speakers of wearing out the audience.

[18] *Leeds Intelligencer*, 23 November 1850.

[19] *Leeds Mercury*, 10 May 1851.

[20] *Leeds Times*, 13 September 1851. The *Times* also noted that Leeds was regarded as the headquarters of educational voluntaryism.

[21] *Leeds Intelligencer*, 20 December 1851.

[22] *Leeds Mercury*, 3 January 1852.

[23] Ibid., 17 January 1852.

[24] *Leeds Mercury*, 13 March, 12 June 1852. In 1833 the Government had voted £20,000 to aid school building. In 1846, the annual grant was raised to £100,000 and by 1857 it was over £540,000. Gillian Sutherland has calculated that in the period 1839-50 the Anglican National Society received eighty percent of all government grants to elementary education. G. Sutherland, *Elementary Education in the Nineteenth Century*, (London: Historical Association, 1971), p. 16.

[25] *Leeds Times*, 25 January 1851.

[26] *Leeds Mercury*, 22 March 1851.

[27] *Leeds Times*, 22 February 1851.

[28] *Leeds Intelligencer*, 15 March 1851. The *Mercury*, claiming that the crowded state of its columns prevented the insertion of the complete letter, provided only a précis of its contents.

[29] D. Fraser, "Poor Law Politics in Leeds, 1833-55," *Thoresby Society Miscellany*, 15. (Leeds, 1971), p. 45.

[30] *Leeds Mercury*, 29 March 1851.

[31] *Leeds Times*, 29 March 1851.

[32] *Leeds Mercury*, *Leeds Times*, 5 April 1851.

[33] *Leeds Mercury*, 19 April 1851.

[34] *Leeds Intelligencer*, 15 November 1851.

[35] *Leeds Mercury*, 15 November 1851.

[36] *Leeds Intelligencer*, 3, 10 April 1851 and *Leeds Mercury*, 3 April 1852. The *Intelligencer* labelled one of the Liberals "extreme".

[37] *Leeds Intelligencer*, 10 April 1852.

[38] *Leeds Intelligencer*, 17 April 1852.

[39] *Leeds Mercury*, *Leeds Times*, 17 April 1852.

[40] *Leeds Intelligencer*, 1 May 1852.

[41] *Leeds Times*, *Leeds Mercury*, 1 May 1852. By virtue of the fact that he was Clerk to the Board, Beckwith also served as the returning officer and also acted in the capacity of a revision court judge. While he appears to have acted within his legal rights by restricting access to the voting papers, he was obviously acting from party motives when he denied the Liberals access to the lists of ratepayers.

[42] The *Leeds Times* and *Leeds Mercury* recorded that Beckwith had "very frankly given every explanation" and "manifested every willingness to give any information in his power". 17 April 1852.

[43] *Leeds Times*, 15 May 1852.

[44] *Leeds Mercury*, *Leeds Times*, 15 May 1852.

[45] *Leeds Mercury*, 24 April 1852. Upon giving up his seat to the new vice-chairman, Atkinson took a seat opposite Stead and suggested that it was always best to face one's enemies.

[46] *Leeds Mercury*, 22 May 1852.

[47] Ibid., 29 May 1852.

[48] The deputation which appeared before the Board consisted of Councillors Kettlewell and Carter and Mr. J. Sellers. The letter was signed by Kettlewell, William Sellers and Charles Hay.

[49] *Leeds Mercury*, 26 June 1852.

[50] *Leeds Intelligencer*, 3 July 1852.

[51] *Leeds Mercury*, 10 January 1852.

[52] *Leeds Intelligencer*, 17 January 1852.

[53] *Leeds Mercury*, 6 December 1851. Baines produced the following table:

Present Parliamentary electors	5,200
Present Municipal electors about	15,700
Estimated number of electors if two years' residence were required.	19,000

[54] Leeds Mercury, 4 October 1851. The Mercury felt that Milligan would not pledge himself to any measure which a London Association might dictate.

[55] Leeds Mercury, 6 December 1851.

[56] Leeds Times, 6 December 1851.

[57] Leeds Mercury, 20 December 1851. It is debatable whether Russell's Government or the public were more apathetic. The Leeds Times remarked upon the "air of nonchalance" with which the Whigs approached their work. 20 December, 1852.

[58] Leeds Times, 24 January 1852.

[59] James Henderson, occupation unknown, was the mover. John Firth, seconded the amendment and claimed that he was a 'working man' and that he had the right to express his opinions since he went "a very different length" from Messrs. Baines and Carbutt.

[60] William Brook, one of the Highway Surveyors was employed by the town council after the election and "A Hater of Jobbery" wrote to the editor of the Intelligencer that it was "the price paid for the sweet voices of certain Chartist pro-liberal electors and non-electors" Leeds Intelligencer, 31 July 1852.

[61] Leeds Times, 24 January 1852.

[62] Ibid., 2 February 1850.

[63] Leeds Times, Leeds Mercury, 6 March 1852. It was estimated that the Circus, a hall used by an equestrian company, accommodated 4,500 - 5,000 people for the meeting. The Leeds Intelligencer conceded that the crowd was very numerous.

[64] Leeds Times, 6 December 1851.

[65] Ibid., 31 January 1852.

[66] Edward Baines nominated Carbutt and pointed out the leading role that he had played in the West Riding Reform Registration Association and the Borough Registration Association during the preceding five years. He credited him with producing registers in both Riding and Borough which were favourable to the Liberals. The Intelligencer, however, labelled Carbutt "Tommy Morgan's candidate". Morgan was the Association's agent. 28 February 1852.

[67] While the Radicals had no argument with the voluntaryist urban Liberals in the borough election of 1847 (Sturge was their joint candidate), they had divided on the choice of a candidate for the Riding bye-election of 1848. Eardley was selected rather than J.A. Roebuck. cf. D. Fraser, "Voluntaryism and West Riding Politics," Northern History, p. 224. Carbutt had taken a leading part with Baines in securing the nomination of Sir Culling Eardley, an extreme voluntaryist.

[68] In its report of the Society's meeting, the Mercury noted that the great expense of money and labour in maintaining the registration of Liberal electors had been sustained by the Society's members.

[69] Ibid., 28 Feburary 1852.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Leeds Intelligencer, 28 February 1852.

[72] Leeds Times, 6 March 1852.

[73] Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Mercury, 6 March 1852. The Intelligencer claimed that Goodman received the greatest support while the Mercury reported that Marshall received the most votes.

[74] He wrote to his brother: "You of course will have understood pretty well that it was not mere considerations of health that led me to that step; but seeing that our concern wanted my personal labour and attention" J.G. Marshall to H.C. Marshall, 23 August 1854, quoted in W.G. Rimmer, Marshalls of Leeds Flax-Spinners 1788-1886, (Cambridge University Press, 1960), p. 269.

[75] Leeds Mercury, 6 March 1852. One year earlier the Mercury had published a letter to the editor signed "One Who Voted for Beckett and Marshall at the Last Election" which was critical of the absence of both from the Commons. Leeds Mercury, 15 March 1851.

[76] Rimmer, Marshall's of Leeds, p. 270.

[77] Leeds Mercury, 6 March 1852.

[78] Carbutt was offered an opportunity to run in "an important mercantile constituency of the sister kingdom" later but declined. Leeds Mercury, 12 June 1852.

[79] Leeds Intelligencer, 13 March 1852.

[80] Leeds Times, 3, 10 July 1852. Kydd served as Richard Oastler's secretary for four years, wrote a "History of the Factory Movement" and lectured in the West Riding on political, social, and literary subjects. In June 1861, he was called to the Bar. Leeds Intelligencer, 15 June 1861.

[81] Leeds Mercury, 1 March 1851. Baines gave evidence at the Inquiry into corruption at the Hull election of 1852. It is clear that his decision against seeking re-election was based on his aversion to the bribery which had been carried out on his behalf in 1847. He had been unaware of it until after the election. Leeds Mercury, 6 August 1853.

[82] Leeds Mercury, 13 March 1852.

[83] Leeds Times, Leeds Mercury, 13 March 1852.

[84] J. Bright to E. Baines, 20 March 1852. Baines MSS. Leeds City Archives.

[85] Leeds Mercury, 20 March 1852.

[86] Leeds Intelligencer, 20 March 1852.

[87] Leeds Times, 27 March 1852. Leeds Mercury, 13, 27 March 1852.

[88] William Sellers, tallow chandler, Potternewton; Joseph Gaunt, woollen manufacturer, Bramley; and Joseph Cliffe, fire-brick and sanitary tube manufacturer, Wortley.

[89] Leeds Intelligencer, 27 March, 1852. The newspaper had also denied a rumour one month earlier about the possibility of Beckett's withdrawal. Leeds Intelligencer, 28 February 1852.

[90] Ibid., 3 April 1852. Although neither Evangelicals nor the extreme ritualists were particularly strong within Leeds Anglicanism there had been a major ritualistic controversy involving St. Saviour's church between 1845 and 1851. N. Yates, "The Religious Life of Victorian Leeds," in A History of Modern Leeds, ed. Fraser. p. 263.

[91] The Intelligencer estimated that there were fewer than 5,200 parliamentary voters in the borough and the following statistics were provided. (The Mercury calculated 5,132 after duplicates and dead were deducted. Leeds Intelligencer, 3 April 1852, Leeds Mercury, 17 April 1852. Later the Mercury revised its forecast to 5,151. 1 May 1852.)

Election	No. of names on Register	No. of persons who voted
1841	6,316	4,092
1847	6,300	4,335

[92] Leeds Times, 24 April 1852. The Intelligencer was much harsher on the Conservatives claiming that they had totally neglected the Registration Courts for five years. Leeds Intelligencer, 24 April 1852.

[93] In the Kirkgate ward the Liberal candidate won in spite of a Conservative majority on the municipal register and the Conservative candidates won in the Mill Hill ward although there was a majority of Liberals. The Mercury explained that the Mill Hill Liberals had been supine and inactive. Leeds Mercury, 8 November 1851.

[94] Leeds Mercury, 17 April 1852.

[95] Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Times, 24 April 1852.

[96] Leeds Mercury, 7 June 1851. The Mercury noted that on the voters' list for the 1852 election there would be 1,905 names that were not included on the previous list. Leeds Mercury, 1 May 1852.

[97] Leeds Times, Leeds Mercury, 1 May 1852.

[98] Leeds Times, 28 February 1852. The rumours were probably based on fact. cf. Taylor, Biographia Leodiensis. p. 635.

[99] Leeds Intelligencer, 1 May 1852.

[100] Leeds Times and Leeds Intelligencer, 22 May 1852. The Times suggested that many signed the address to Beckett because they believed it to be a testimonial of respect to him. The Conservatives, it was suggested, also used the term requisition which would have made a signature on it tantamount to a pledge of support in an election. Leeds Times, 15, 29 May 1852.

[101] Leeds Times, Leeds Intelligencer, 29 May 1852.

[102] Leeds Intelligencer, 5, 19 June 1852.

[103] Leeds Intelligencer, 3 July 1852.

[104] The Intelligencer estimated the crowd at 12,000-15,000 while the Mercury proved more conservative at 8,000-10,000. Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, 10 July 1852.

[105] Leeds Times, Leeds Mercury, 10 July 1852.

[106] Leeds Intelligencer, 25 October 1851.

[107] Leeds Mercury, 10 July 1852. Thomas Fountain, the house agent who nominated Robert Hall, opened his remarks by agreeing that the crowd had often seen him (Fountain) at the tail of a party but never before at the head of one!

[108] Leeds Times, 31 July 1852.

[109] Leeds Mercury, 17 July 1852.

[110] Leeds Times and Leeds Intelligencer, 10 July 1852.

[111] Fraser, "Politics in Leeds," p. 392. Fraser calculated a 68% vote in 1852 and used the gross figures for the electorate (6,404) from which he deducted 20% for deaths, removals and double entries. "Politics in Leeds" p. 490. (See footnote 91.)

[112] Leeds Mercury, 10 July 1852.

[113] At the nomination meeting for the 1852 election, J.G. Marshall said that he would never regret the earnestness with which he had supported his views on the education question. M.T. Baines and Goodman mentioned education in their addresses to Liberal electors. They both indicated that the provision of education would have to be increased and Goodman, although claiming to be attached to the voluntary principle, urged the audience not to close its ears to a scheme of national education. Leeds Mercury, 27 March, 10 July 1852.

[114] Fraser, "Politics in Leeds," pp. 365, 366. Fraser was unable to determine the exact date of the Society's demise in 1843 but suggested that it was some time after Spring. The Leeds Mercury suggested that even in its previous form it had "consisted of parties far above the rank of operatives, and a few Tory runners". 17 January 1852. From the scanty reports of its activities in 1852 it seems that the main actors in the Society continued to be found from outside the operative group: William Heywood, pawnbroker; J.W. Gregory, bedding manufacturer; Seth Joy, cloth manufacturer and Guardian John Woodhead, painter.

[115] Leeds Intelligencer, 14 February, 27 March 1852. Leeds Times, Leeds Mercury, 31 January, 27 March 1852.

[116] Leeds Times, 17 April 1852. The Mercury reported that hundreds had walked into the vestry just prior to noon in anticipation of the meeting. Dr. Fraser suggests that the election of the Churchwardens had been removed from Leeds politics in 1850 because that was the year of the last contested warden's election. It is obvious that the election of 1852 still generated political interest. cf. D. Fraser "The Leeds Churchwardens 1828-1850," Thoresby Society Miscellany 15 Part I (Leeds, 1970), p. 22.

[117] Leeds Times, 3 July 1852. Leeds Mercury, 1 May 1852.

[118] The Leeds Intelligencer had hoped that the revived Society would be supported by the wealthier friends of the cause. 10 January 1852.

CHAPTER 3

1852 - 57: LIBERALS DISUNITED

> The "liberals" quarrelled fiercely among themselves, and angry cries against an intolerable dictation were heard.
> Leeds Intelligencer, 4 April 1857.

I

In December 1852, Matthew Talbot Baines was appointed President of the Poor Law Board in Lord Aberdeen's ministry, a position which he had also held from January 1849 until the end of Russell's first ministry in February 1852. Following the Parliamentary practice of the period, Baines was required to resign his seat in the House of Commons in order to give the electors of Leeds the opportunity to consider both his candidature and the record of the government which he was about to join. The re-election took place without opposition at a poorly attended nomination meeting which was held on 3 January 1853.

The Conservatives had, in spite of all their good intentions, lost ground to the Liberals at the 1852 parliamentary revision. Yet there were some signs of a nascent organization since the party was at least prepared enough to be represented at the revision court by Bertie Markland, solicitor, who appeared as its legal advisor, and William Gregory and David Richardson who acted as unofficial agents for the party. While the bye-election may not have produced a Conservative candidate in opposition to Baines, it had provided an occasion for a Conservative Association meeting, held on 29 December 1852, at which a formal decision was taken not to contest the nomination. Six weeks later it was reported that a number of professional gentlemen and tradesmen who were "among the most staunch supporters of Conservative principles in the borough" had decided to hold a series of festive gatherings in order to provide an opportunity for "the dissemination of political counsel".[1] In the same month the Leeds Intelligencer, in a complete reversal of opinion on the value of Land Societies, gave strong support to the national Conservative Land Society because of the extra county votes which it would produce for the party.[2] Although a meeting held on 9 March was not well-attended, an estate was purchased in Leeds by the Society and it was allotted to shareholders on 1 July. In addition, the Leeds Conservative Association met on 28 April to appoint an agent.[3] By July 1853, the Leeds Times was able to credit the Conservative party with strenuous exertion at the national level, not only with respect to attending to its position on the Register but also in the manner in which the Land Society was growing. It recorded a lack of activity on the part of the Liberals.[4] At the local level Henry Lampen, the Conservative agent, proved the value of his labours when the borough registration court, held in September 1853, produced a net gain of 48 for the Conservatives.

Thomas Morgan, agent of the Leeds Reform Registration Association for twenty years, died in December 1853. The Leeds Mercury suggested that his unwearying attention to his duties had undermined his health.[5] Although Morgan's death weakened the Liberal party, as did the internal disputes, it is probable that even greater damage would have been sustained had not Thomas Plint, the agent for the West Riding Liberal Registration Association, assumed Morgan's duties. As it was, the Conservatives claimed a gain of 111 in the 1854 borough revision and the Liberals conceded a Conservative gain on claims and objections of three for the following year.[6] In 1855, the Leeds Mercury seemed compelled to try to decrease emphasis on the significance of a victory by either party at the revision court. It noted the several hundreds of names which appeared on the 1854 register but were absent from that of the following year, and the newspaper calculated that a quarter of the constituency on the 1855 register would not have been on the register at the election held three years earlier. It would be difficult, it was suggested, to ascertain the politics of the new voters and it would probably be necessary to determine the position of both parties by the process of an election.[7] The newspaper had vaunted Liberal gains at the revision courts in previous years and its change in policy may have had its origin in an attempt to divert attention from what appears to have been a less effective approach to the registration of Liberal supporters. It is also significant that this was the period in which the Leeds Advanced Liberal party chose to organize and part of the dissatisfaction felt by members of that group was concerned with the Reform Registration Association's apparent ineffectiveness at the revision court.[8]

The unity of the Leeds Reform Registration Association was also threatened in October and November 1855 by a squabble in a meeting of town council between two ostensibly Liberal aldermen. Alderman Kelsall accused Alderman Luccock of mismanagement of the Reform Registration Association's accounts. At one point it was anticipated that Alderman Luccock would submit the matter to the courts but it was settled after Kelsall had examined the accounts, with Edward Baines, and found them in order. Kelsall apologised but the affairs of the Association were obviously at a low ebb when they were being discussed openly in the municipal parliament by prominent members of the Liberal hierarchy.

On 2 August 1855, M.T. Baines announced that he had resigned his position as President of the Poor Law Board due to failing health and his committee met at the offices of the Reform Registration Association on 11 August. A resolution supporting his decision was passed but it was preceded by a discussion which included opinions expressed by some members of the committee "adverse to the votes of the hon. member on several questions".[9] On 24 November, Baines announced that he had accepted the office of Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster - a less demanding but more prestigious post because it brought cabinet membership. Unlike the situation two years before, when Parliament was in session and the bye-election was called immediately, there was to be a two-month waiting period from the appointment to office until Parliament reconvened and the election writ could be issued. Robert Hall gave notice that he reserved judgement on whether or not to contest the election. He had no doubt that an immediate election would have resulted in the return of Baines but he suggested that in the two-month waiting period "very important questions may arise, demanding a different course of action". Hall alluded to the "present position of the Country" presumably leaving all options open in the event that Palmerston's government mishandled the Crimean War in the same manner as Aberdeen's ministry.[10] The Liberal press suggested that Hall had addressed the electors merely to keep his name before them and to avoid relinquishing his claim to the votes of the Conservatives. There was obviously justification for such comments but it cannot have escaped

Hall's attention that the "advanced Liberals" were continuing their organizational activities at that period. Nor would the dissentient voices in Baines' election committee four months earlier have passed unnoticed. The Leeds Times found it necessary to rally Whigs and "Liberals who go further than Mr. Baines" behind their cabinet member. Hall, the newspaper claimed, would receive little support, even "from many Tories", but it is noteworthy that the journal which was the voice of the "advanced Liberals" devoted a complete column of editorial comment in support of Baines.[11] The possibility of a Conservative challenge was being taken seriously.

By the time that the writ was received the Conservatives had decided that they would not oppose Baines. The Leeds Intelligencer announced that the party would be ready for the next general election and that the state of the register led them to believe they were in a position to return a candidate of their choice. While there was no opposition to Baines' nomination for re-election, two of the "advanced Liberals" used the opportunity to test him on the issues of the franchise and vote by ballot. He responded that the former should be "very materially extended" but that he continued to oppose vote by ballot. While Baines' return was viewed by the Leeds Mercury as unequivocal evidence of the approbation of the constituency for the policies of the government, the Conservative journal reiterated its view that the unopposed re-election had been due to the expectation of an early general election and a wish to avoid causing difficulties for the government at a critical moment.[12]

In March 1856, the Daily News announced the demise of Sir George Goodman. While the information was premature and Sir George returned to Leeds on 19 March as if to disprove the rumour, he was obviously in declining health. By 19 April the Leeds Times was wondering whether Leeds could return a Radical with M. Talbot Baines if ill-health did not allow Sir George's candidacy at another election.[13] The Conservatives had held their Association's annual meeting on 25 March and Robert Hall met the Conservative Committee for the borough on 3 April. The discussions had focussed on the course to be adopted in the event of any vacancy arising in the representation of the borough or of a dissolution of Parliament. The Committee agreed unanimously to support Hall and to offer no opposition to Baines if he were chosen as the Liberal candidate.[14] The Leeds Mercury reprinted the Intelligencer's account of the meeting verbatim with no editorial comment.

Finally, the borough revision of the list of parliamentary electors in 1856 resulted in a net gain for the Conservatives. The Liberal press calculated a net gain of three to the Conservatives while the Leeds Intelligencer proclaimed that the gain was twenty-five. At the parliamentary level it is evident that the period between the elections of 1852 and 1857 was characterized by a resurgent Conservative party and a Liberal party which was showing signs of disintegration. In order to determine the basis for the shifting fortunes of the two groups, an examination of the political activity at the municipal level is necessary, for it is only by tracing the detail of the local elections that an understanding of the reason for the results of the 1857 parliamentary elections can be gained.

II

When the municipal revision of the burgess lists was completed in October 1852, the Conservatives, while not able to record a net gain, were able to boast of being in a much better position than they had been for several years. The improvement in the fortunes of the party was attributed to "the re-animated Conservative organization which was the vigorous offspring of the late gallant contest for the parliamentary representation of the borough".[15] The total number of burgesses for 1852 was 16,993 - an increase of nearly one thousand over the previous year which was attributed to the improvement of trade in the borough. Better economic times not only increased the number of householders, but also produced a more punctual payment of rates.[16] The Conservative party might well congratulate itself on its endeavours in meeting the challenge of monitoring registration during a period of an increasing burgess roll. Even the Leeds Mercury recognized that during the course of the year the Conservatives had made great efforts to organize.[17] Nevertheless, there was no reward for the increased activity in terms of council seats because the 1852 municipal election left both parties with the same numerical strength. The Conservatives were having difficulty attracting suitable candidates during a period in which interest was characterized as being "languid". The domination of the Liberals combined with the demands on time were, concluded the Leeds Intelligencer, making municipal office unattractive. The newspaper's conclusion after the election was that the apathy of the party's supporters was still deep-rooted and that only "the most determined and unceasing exertions" would eradicate it.[18]

The municipal elections for 1852 were not, however, devoid of political manoeverings. In the West ward an uneasy alliance between Liberals and Chartists, which was supposed to allow the election of one candidate from each group, saw the last minute nomination of a second Liberal candidate due to dissatisfaction with John Ardill, the Chartist nominee. Nevertheless, Ardill, a card maker, was returned. John Patterson, who had seconded Ardill's nomination, was a candidate himself in the Holbeck ward. Patterson, a commercial traveller, stood for election with John Holmes, a Chartist linen draper, but their Liberal opponents were elected. The Chartists challenged the decision of the returning officers and were allowed to recount the voting papers. They concluded that Holmes should have been returned instead of one of the Liberal candidates; however, a quo warranto would have been required to initiate an investigation of the returning officers' decision and, as the Leeds Intelligencer pointed out, it was doubtful whether Holmes set such a price upon the honour within his reach that he would be prepared to assume the legal costs involved. Thomas Jones, a wire worker, was the Chartist candidate in the Hunslet ward and his only opponent was Enoch Blackburn, the Liberal incumbent. The Conservatives threw their support behind Blackburn and the Leeds Mercury noted that even the vicar voted for him![19]

The elections in Holbeck and Hunslet were carried on with as much intensity as if they had been contests between Conservatives and Liberals. In letters to the editor the election committees of the Holbeck Liberal and Chartist candidates accused each other of election day misdemeanours. The Chartists accused the "Wortley Whigs" of taking voters to the polls in "a state of beastly drunkeness" and similar accusations were levelled against the Blackburn committee in Hunslet.

In addition, some employers in the ward had provided coaches to transport their employees to the poll and had instructed them to vote for Blackburn. Obviously, there was a serious rift in the "party of all shades".[20]

The contest between a Liberal and a Conservative candidate in Kirkgate ward had resulted in the return of the latter by a one vote margin. The Liberals pursued the matter on the grounds of voting irregularities by two electors. While the details of the issue may not be significant for this study it is noteworthy that the legal counsel for the Conservative candidate was Robert Hall. It shows that Hall was prepared to be more than simply a figurehead for the party who would become involved only in parliamentary elections and it also shows the strong links between political activity at municipal and parliamentary levels. The Kirkgate election was, by the consent of both parties, declared void and a second election took place on 8 July 1853. The Conservative candidate was returned with a majority of seventy-one votes and victory was celebrated with a banquet for over two hundred gentlemen and a tea for about two hundred and fifty wives and daughters. Francis Ferns, a solicitor, took advantage of the opportunity provided by the banquet to urge support for the Leeds Conservative Association.[21] It is evident that the Association was proving itself to be more effective than its Liberal rival because the gains made by the Conservatives in the revision of the borough voters' lists in 1853 were paralleled by a net gain of 164 voters on the municipal register.[22]

The 1853 municipal election resulted in a net gain of two Conservative seats and the party appears to have run a skillful campaign.[23]

At one point the Leeds Mercury announced that Richard Stead had retired as a candidate in the Kirkgate ward in order to avoid a split in Conservative ranks because William Wray, another Conservative, had also been nominated. In fact, Stead remained in Kirkgate and Wray ran in the East ward where the Conservatives defeated a Liberal incumbent who, they charged, had actively participated in a campaign to remove pigs from the proximity of cottages in the ward - an appropriate focus for a campaign in a ward where many of the electors were pig owners! The Liberal incumbent, however, had not helped his campaign by his refusal to attend ward meetings and by his reluctance to carry out a thorough canvass of voters. In the North East ward the Conservative candidate was able to exploit the Liberal split in the ward when two Liberal candidates were nominated. In Mill Hill the Conservatives fielded a candidate at the last moment when it was realized that one of the Liberal candidates, John Barran, the master tailor who played a leading role in the development of the ready-made clothes industry, was being opposed by every Liberal master tailor in the ward. Although the Conservative candidate was unsuccessful he was only 31 votes behind Barran.

The split between the Liberal and Chartist camps continued in the Holbeck and Hunslet wards. In Hunslet a revolt took place against the

> self elected professedly Liberal committee who have for years been in the habit of meeting, to the number of about six, nominating a candidate and publishing placards, headed 'At a numerously attended meeting of the burgesses etc'.24

John Williamson, a Chartist grocer, who was nominated at a public open-air meeting, was the successful candidate. After the election it was noted that his campaign had been conducted economically at a cost of under £5.10s. It was pointed out that the Liberal committee had hired several coaches and an omnibus to convey supporters to the poll. In contrast the working men who supported Williamson were "on this occasion walking men and did their duty".[25]

In Holbeck, where the contest was marked by a much larger number of votes being cast than in any other ward, the Liberal and Chartist groups agreed to support the re-election of Robert Meek Carter but the rivalry between Alderman Hepper's "Wortley Whigs" and the Holbeck Liberals had not abated. The Leeds Mercury played down the division and explained that it was the result of a misunderstanding but the Leeds Times provides much more detail about the basis of the split. The Holbeck section of the ward contained about two-thirds of the electors and the Holbeck Liberals suggested that the Wortley Whigs should nominate a candidate every second year while the Holbeck group would nominate one candidate every year and two candidates every second year. Hepper's group refused to agree to the proposal and the division resulted in three nominations for the 1853 elections. The result was the return of Robert Coxon, butcher, along with fellow Chartist Robert Meek Carter.[26]

Finally, John Patterson, the unsuccessful Chartist candidate in Hunslet ward in the 1852 election and seconder of John Ardill's nomination in the West ward in the same election, was elected councillor for the West ward as one of the two unopposed "Liberal" candidates. His running-mate, the Liberal T.W. George, had been squeezed out of the West ward nomination by Ardill's success the previous year. In spite of the fervor of the contests in Holbeck and Hunslet it was still possible for a temporary truce to be established in the West ward.

At the revision court of 1854, the Leeds Conservative Association presented 2,379 objections to names on the burgess roll while the Liberals had objected to 1,087 entries on the register. The Conservatives claimed that they wanted to settle the issue about whether an individual who was qualified to vote in two or more wards should choose the ward in which he wanted to vote at the time of registration or at the moment of voting. In Leeds, for lack of clear guidance from the statute book, custom had established that voters could select the ward in which they would vote by presenting themselves at the appropriate polling booth. The issue had been raised before the Mayor and Assessors on previous occasions by parties who had wished to ensure that the ward of voting should be selected at the time of registration but the ruling had invariably gone against the party which hoped to change the procedures.[27] Although the Conservatives were unable to get a change in the customary practice they claimed to have a net gain of 662 on the municipal register.[28] The Leeds Mercury complained that the municipal revision process, unlike that in place for parliamentary revisions, enabled "unprincipled party agents" to make as many objections as they wished. It conceded, however, that the Conservatives, after a long apathy, had been aroused.[29]

The Conservatives had a clear gain of four seats on the town council for the 1854-55 year. In Holbeck, the rift between groups in the 'party of all shades' continued. Councillor R.M. Carter presided over a meeting attended by five hundred persons at which two candidates were nominated but at another meeting Alderman Hepper's Wortley Whigs also nominated the retiring councillor in order to try to prevent the election of the Chartist butcher, Henry Child. In neighbouring Hunslet the incumbent Chartist councillor, William Parker, an eating-house keeper, was defeated by a Liberal while in the North West ward Robert Green, a Chartist councillor who had not sought re-election was replaced by James Kitson, a partner in a large firm which produced railway engines. The Intelligencer declared that had a Chartist sought election, the Conservatives would have rallied around Kitson![30]

In 1854, the West ward was again the scene of a division between Liberals and Chartists. The two retiring Chartist councillors were opposed by two Liberals and, as in the 1853 Hunslet election, it was inferred that the reason for the split was a desire on the part of one section to break the control exercised in the ward by a small group of "obscure and powerful men". It appears that the Chartists were as apt to resort to 'hole and corner' meetings as their Liberal opponents. The Conservatives did not field candidates in the Holbeck, Hunslet, North West or West wards.

In an editorial which bemoaned the division in the Liberal ranks in the West ward, the Leeds Mercury suggested that the Conservatives were "in such low water in the ward that even a division among their opponents afforded them no reasonable chance of success".[31] Meanwhile, the Conservative organ regarded the results in Holbeck as a victory for moderate Liberals and Conservatives over extreme Liberals and Chartists; the successful candidate in Hunslet was touted as a Liberal Conservative; the result in the North West ward was achieved by Conservative pressure which forced the leading Liberals to put forward a more moderate candidate on pain of a contest in the ward; and the West ward was a quasi victory for the Conservatives as it would help to alter the 'tone' of the Council. The Leeds Times also recorded that there was growing impression on the part of some West ward electors that there was "a small party in the Council of the borough which has succeeded in detracting materially from its character as a body".[32] The Conservatives, obviously, were prepared to encourage division in the ranks of their opponents by refraining from participating in contests which they were unlikely to win and in which the presence of Conservative candidates would probably have tended to reunite the different sections of the 'party of all shades'. It appears that the defeated candidates in the West ward election had been supported by the Leeds Mercury. The chairman of the Botterill and Greenwood election committee complained that the newspaper had allowed a one-sided report of the proceedings of the ward meetings to appear and had not published a counter statement.[33]

The Mill Hill ward was lost to the Liberals for two reasons; like the Kirkgate, East, and North East wards, Liberal support had been thinned due to the objections raised by the Conservative Association at the revision court. In addition, the Liberal in-fighting in the West ward had drawn some Mill Hill Liberals, who were qualified in both wards, to vote for one or other of the sets of opponents in the West ward.[34] At the first meeting of the town council following the election, Councillors Newton and Carter tried to raise the issue of Alderman Kelsall's supervision of the poll at Hunslet. The alderman, who led the support for the incumbents in the West ward, had cast his vote in the ward before going to the Hunslet poll and, therefore, it was opened twenty minutes late at 9:20 a.m. and had closed ten minutes late at 4:10 p.m.. The town clerk, in response to a question on the legality or illegality of such proceedings, suggested that the matter could only be decided in Queen's Bench and so it was dropped. It is clear that the rift in Liberal ranks was serious when the matter was raised in the municipal parliament rather than in the privacy of a party meeting. When Thomas W. George, a West ward councillor, was created an alderman in September the group which had supported Botterill and Greenwood appear to have gained control of the ward, and their candidate was elected by acclamation. The Leeds Mercury expressed pleasure at finding the Liberal party in the ward united once again![35]

The Leeds borough parliamentary revision for 1855 was noteworthy only for the amicable arrangements which the Liberal and Conservative agents made over most of the claims and objections. They were obviously concentrating on the municipal revision where each party submitted totals of over 1,500 claims and objections. The Liberal press had warned that the Conservatives were active and that their situtation on the register had improved but the Leeds Mercury claimed that the revision had resulted in a net gain of 222 for the Liberals.[36] The analysis which the newspaper had carried out on the electors who held the borough franchise was repeated for the municipal franchise and a similar change in the roll of electors was noted. Edward Baines estimated that nearly twenty-five percent of the names on the 1854 burgess roll were not on the following year's list and that new names constituted over twenty-five percent of the entire list for 1855. He suggested that the main cause for the fluctuation in the burgess roll was the frequent change of residence or occupation by the mechanics and factory workers. It is important to note that either of those changes meant a change in qualification which required updating on the register. The overseers could not always determine whether a person who had moved from one ward to another was qualified, or partially qualified, for the residence qualification.[37]

The most significant contest in the 1855 municipal election was held in the West ward and the Leeds Mercury had been too optimistic in its assumption that unity had been restored. One of the points made by the election committee which had supported Botterill and Greenwood in 1854 had been that Councillor Jackson, who was standing for re-election, was not a resident or a ratepayer in the ward. In 1855, the two retiring councillors wished to seek re-election and, with Councillor Botterill in the chair, the nomination meeting passed a resolution that prevented the nomination of anyone who was neither a resident nor a burgess of the ward. The motion should have eliminated John Ardill, the Chartist councillor, as a candidate because he lived in neighbouring Headingley ward. Nevertheless, he continued his campaign but he was unsuccessful in a three-cornered "Liberal" election contest. The real reason for Ardill's treatment was probably that suggested in a letter signed by his election committee chairman, Councillor John Patterson of the West ward, and by the committee's secretary George Laverack. They claimed that he was excluded from the nomination because he had supported the losing candidates in the election of the previous year. In 1854, the Junction Inn had been used as the staging point for the Botterill-Greenwood coup. Its location, opposite the works of Peter Fairbairn & Co. Ltd., was important since Thomas Greenwood was a partner in the firm of machine makers, and workmen from the company had been used to pack the nomination meeting. The Junction Inn was also chosen for the ward nomination meeting in 1855, and the largest employers of labour at the west end of the town were accused of using all their influence against Ardill. Tempers were raised to the extent that there was an "unfortunate fracas" on the evening of the election.[38] Given the intensity of feeling which was developing, it is not surprising that a circular was issued on 29 October, two days before the municipal election, urging the formation of a political association of "advanced Liberals" nor is it a surprise to discover that Ardill and Patterson were among those who signed the circular. At a West ward municipal dinner held on 20 November, John Chiesman, a leader in the Botterill-Greenwood group, noted that two years before they had had three representatives who were "scarcely up to the mark", that two of them had been ejected and the third would be disposed of the following year. It is clear that he meant Patterson.[39]

In the North West ward J.M. Barret, the Liberal solicitor, was returned by acclamation but he did not escape the nomination without being questioned about his views on an extension of the suffrage. Braithwaite, the interrogator, was to become a member of the steering committee of the new political association. The Holbeck ward was unusually quiescent in 1855, since the "Wortley Whigs" and the Holbeck group each selected one candidate and both were elected by acclamation.[40]

The Conservatives made a gain of three seats as a result of the 1855 municipal election. The Leeds Times attributed the victory of the Conservatives in the Mill Hill ward to the intemperate attack made by Alderman Kelsall on those who had been named as suitable for appointment to the magistrates' bench. While Kelsall's name had been on a preliminary list which had been prepared by the council, it had not been included on the list which had been prepared subsequently by a joint committee of town council and the magistrates. Edwin Irwin, the Conservative candidate in Mill Hill, benefited when Kelsall's speech was published in the press on the morning of the election. The Conservative who was returned for the East ward was elected by a margin of one vote. In Hunslet the unopposed incumbent was returned as a Liberal-Conservative and in Bramley, where accommodation between the parties was developing as something of a tradition, a Liberal was returned along with another Liberal-Conservative. Neither of the Liberal-Conservatives was claimed as an addition to the strength of the Conservative party, and the Leeds Intelligencer appeared content to report that the bulk of the Conservatives in Hunslet had "respected" the incumbent.

The municipal revision in 1856 left the Liberals with a net gain after claims and objections of 207. The decline in Conservative fortunes may have been the result of the loss of Henry Lampen, secretary of the Conservative Association who, after the death of John Beckwith, had been appointed clerk to the Leeds Board of Guardians in February. The lack of success at the revision court was matched in the elections for 1856 by the indifference of Conservative voters in some wards and a split in the ranks in others. In Kirkgate ward the incumbent Richard Stead, who was also Chairman of the Board of Guardians, sought re-election but William Wray, the retiring councillor from the East ward, was also nominated. In the North East ward William Middleton secured his party's nomination in preference to James Phillips, the retiring councillor. Phillips was angered at the duplicitous action of Middleton because it had been the latter who had asked Phillips to stand for re-election and had also declared that business commitments would prevent him from seeking a seat on Council. Phillips appeared at the Liberal candidates' rally and spoke against Middleton. The Leeds Intelligencer supported Middleton and noted his record as a poor-law guardian as evidence of his suitability for a seat on the town council.[41] The Conservative organ refrained from associating either Stead or Wray with the Board of Guardians although both were members. Stead had, in fact, been under attack from a minority of the Conservative group of Guardians and the Leeds Mercury suggested that he had benefited in the municipal election from a "sympathy vote".[42]

The West ward was the scene of a significant re-alignment within the Liberal camp. A meeting was held at the Junction Inn on 26 September which resulted in the "suggestion" that Messrs. Reffitt and Ardill be nominated at an official meeting to be held at the Model Infant School in Park Lane on Wednesday, 1 October. On Monday, 29 September, John Chiesman convened a meeting at the Junction Inn which resulted in the nomination of Messrs. Reffitt, Wright and Tatham. Chiesman had used Councillor Botterill's name on the circular which was issued to call the meeting but Botterill, who was out of town at the time, expressed his annoyance at the use of his name, and at the Model Infant School meeting, which was chaired by Peter Fairbairn, he supported Ardill as a candidate. The excuse that had been used to oust Ardill the previous year was conveniently forgotten and Fairbairn made it clear that he had assumed the role of chairman on the understanding that all differences within the party had been healed. Fairbairn and Botterill became chairman and vice-chairman of the Reffitt and Ardill election committee.[43]

Joseph Wright, the cloth finisher, who was nominated at Chiesman's meeting was a Conservative and he also received the support of his own party in the West ward. Thomas Tilney, who had chaired the Chiesman meeting, was also present at the Conservative nomination meeting and a *quid pro quo* was agreed whereby the Conservatives would vote for Reffitt if Reffitt's supporters would vote for Wright. Reffitt was put into the position of having to deny that an alliance with Wright existed and he insisted that he stood for election with Ardill. He was able to avoid further controversy when the campaign in the ward deteriorated into one of personalities whereby Ardill's and Wright's supporters exchanged insults on the character of each other's candidate. Botterill rebuked Ardill's supporters for their attacks upon Wright; the Liberal power brokers withdrew their support from Ardill and he was not elected. As the *Leeds Mercury* noted, the issue was "quite a godsend to Mr. Wright's party" and Wright, who owed his success to the votes of the moderate Liberals, was returned with Reffitt.[44]

In Holbeck ward R.M. Carter, the Chartist retiring councillor, was re-nominated with William Illingworth, timber merchant, the nominee of the Wortley group. A contest between the Liberals was created when the second retiring councillor, R. Coxon, was also re-nominated together with Benjamin Woolley. The *Leeds Times* urged that a compromise be made in order to avoid a contest and the *Leeds Mercury* suggested that since the four candidates were Liberals it was a personal rather than a political contest! In its analysis of the election the Conservative newspaper placed Coxon and Woolley in the Chartist camp.[45] In Hunslet, William Parker, the Chartist temperance hotel keeper, was a last minute candidate who forced an election contest with a Liberal candidate.

While the Leeds Mercury labelled Parker and Ardill Chartists, the Leeds Times used the label Radical for both them and Robert Meek Carter.

The Leeds Times concluded that the 1856 municipal elections in Leeds had passed by without exciting any profound interest in the borough. It felt that

> votes appear to have been generally registered for the best men independent of political party . . . Party is dead - at least for the nonce - and it is next to impossible to galvanize its elements into either artificial or spasmodic life . . . no great national question stirs the public mind . . .. Under such circumstances it can be no great inconsistency . . . for a Liberal burgess to vote for a Conservative of known integrity and wisdom . . . and in this political deadness how can we expect the burgesses to look upon the annual election of town council with anything like peculiar or active interest?46

There had been six uncontested wards in the election with Liberals returned in five wards and a Conservative in the sixth. The contest in the East ward was a sham with Ardill, Stead and Wray having their names inserted at the last minute garnering five, five and two votes for each of them respectively. The Conservatives lost one seat on council but the real losers were the Chartist (or Radical) candidates who, in their continuing struggle to replace Liberals in some seats, were soundly defeated with only Carter being elected. While the Leeds Times might have concluded that there had been a lack of political activity it also reported that the Radical candidate in Hunslet was beaten when the Conservatives gave their support to the Liberal candidate. The bargain which was struck allowed the Conservatives to nominate a candidate in the ward when the next vacancy occurred and the newspaper suggested that Parker had therefore been "sold" in Hunslet. Botterill, it would appear, had "bought" his way into the aldermanic ranks by his double volte-face in the West ward: he reversed his stand on Ardill's candidacy first by opposing him in 1855 on the basis of his non-residency and then by supporting his candidacy in 1856 thereby proving himself a supporter of a Liberal party of "all shades"; and then when he, along with the other Liberal luminaries, subsequently deserted Ardill during the 1856 election. Botterill also became the mayor for the 1856-57 municipal year and the Liberal nominee to replace him as a councillor was returned unopposed.

Enoch Blackburn's elevation to the aldermanic bench in 1856 created a vacancy in Hunslet ward and so the Liberal-Conservative compact was soon put to the test. The Liberals were not totally virtuous because a Liberal candidate was nominated, but the Conservative maltster Benjamin Idle was elected. William Parker was again a candidate in the Chartist interest and received more votes than the Liberal nominee.

It is clear that J.F.C. Harrison's assertion that 1853 was the last time that the Chartist label was used in Leeds municipal elections is inaccurate.[47] While he acknowledged that the ex-Chartists continued the fight as Radicals and Liberals it would appear that when even the Leeds Mercury labels candidates as Chartists in 1856 one should recognize a Chartist presence beyond 1853. Dr. Fraser has calculated the number of wards in which there was a contest at each annual municipal election: 1852 - seven; 1853 - seven; 1854 - six; 1855 - five; 1856 - six.[48] This is only part of the picture since it gives no indication of changing personnel. If one uses the definition that 'new councillor' is someone who had not appeared on the annual list of councillors between 1851 and 1856 it is clear that there was a somewhat greater movement on the council than is suggested by annual elections in which, on average, approximately fifty percent of the wards were contested. The five elections for the period 1852-53 to 1856-57 gave an opportunity for the election of 80 'new councillors'and during that period there were fifty-four who could be classified in that category. Some had obtained their seats in bye-elections, nevertheless, the result was an overall turn-over of sixty-eight percent. The individuals who obtained seats on council may not always have been considered to be suitable but in quantitative terms municipal politics in Leeds was not completely moribund.[49] Indeed, the period 1852-53 to 1856-57 witnessed a resurgent Conservative group whose success may be attributed partly to better organization and partly to the infighting within the Liberal camp. On the other hand there is also evidence that accommodation was reached between moderate Liberals and Conservatives on some occasions either to keep Chartists out of Council or to prevent unnecessary expense. However, in spite of the Liberal and Conservative alliances and the occasional label 'Liberal Conservative' for candidates, the balance of the evidence supports the view that Leeds Conservatives were able not only to maintain their position but also to consolidate their overall organization; proof of which is confirmed by the increase in their share of Council seats.

III

The poll which took place for the election of Highway Surveyors in 1852 was not necessary in the following year because the Chartists proved themselves capable of retaining control of the annual meeting and their list of nineteen nominees was accepted. John O'Rourke, a

Conservative party worker, was among the small crowd and although he made a rather half-hearted objection to two or three individuals on the list, the protest failed, and the meeting only lasted one hour.[50]

The use of ashes for road construction was an annoyance to members of both political parties and in 1854, the Leeds Intelligencer launched an attack upon the Board of Highway Surveyors for its continued use of that method. Fourteen gentlemen were suggested as replacements for a like number of the retiring Board and five members of the old Board were to be retained. The newspaper noted that the fourteen who had been brought forward were not confined to one party.[51] It was evident that the Conservative newspaper was correct when the list of nominees was published and it was equally clear that it was a non-partisan issue when Darnton Lupton, a leading figure in the Liberal party, moved the list at the annual meeting of the Board of Highway Surveyors. Councillor John Ardill tried to prevent Lupton from nominating the list on a technicality and Councillor David Newton, who had nominated the successful lists for the two preceding years, said that none of the members of the 1853-54 Board would consent to serve with the fourteen new persons suggested by Lupton. A poll was demanded by Lupton, but it did not take place because the Lupton list was withdrawn after the challengers were satisfied that the Highway Surveyors would make an effort to use gravel rather than ashes.

It is immaterial that the campaign against the Highway Surveyors was made public by the Conservative organ. The fact was that the Liberals had participated in the attack and Councillor Carter, who also served on the Board of Highway Surveyors, repudiated Lupton's suggestion that all parties ought to be fairly represented on public bodies.

Carter claimed that if the principle applied to that Board then it should also apply to representation in the House of Commons. Lupton, he charged, did not believe in his own principles; otherwise, why did he not allow Carter, as a Chartist, a fair share of representatives in the House of Commons? It cannot have escaped the attention of the Chartists that the group of gentlemen which sought to displace them consisted of Liberals as well as Conservatives.

The Chartists had become complacent as a result of their electoral victories and it is apparent that their group was no different from any other party which had enjoyed an extended period of office without a serious challenge to its incumbency. At the annual meeting of ratepayers which was held on 26 March 1855, to consider the accounts and to elect a Board for the year 1855-56, the proceedings were very noisy. The hitherto sympathetic Councillor Newton led the attack on the Board with the objection that one of its employees had carried out canvassing activities during working hours while supposedly being paid for his regular duties. Although the Surveyors were within their legal rights to audit the Board's financial statements John Chiesman, the Liberal party worker, joined others in a demand that three ratepayers should audit the accounts for the year. John O'Rourke, a Conservative party worker, moved that the old Board be re-elected and his motion was seconded by John Chiesman.[52] The attack on the Board was obviously a united effort when Conservative and Liberal party workers supported each other. O'Rourke's motion was withdrawn when Councillor Newton challenged the legality of attempting to re-appoint a group rather than to nominate the individual members of it. Newton followed this coup by presenting his nominees, several of whom had not served as Surveyors.

George Robson's name was excluded, explained Newton, because he had attended only seven of the fifty-two weekly meetings and a quantity of stones had been bought by Robson from the Board's supply and later sold at a profit. Councillor Carter, who had been Chairman of the Board at the time of the sale of stones, had to confirm that the transaction had taken place and therefore a wedge was driven, albeit temporarily, between Carter and Robson - two of the leading Chartists in Leeds.

Three lists of highway surveyors were proposed at the five-hour meeting and although a group of nineteen was elected, Councillor Newton demanded a poll on behalf of some of the unsuccessful candidates whom he had nominated. The result of the poll was that Newton managed to get fifteen of his nominees elected along with four, including Robson, from another list. The Chartists maintained control of the Board of Highway Surveyors, but the shock that the Board members received may have provided the impetus for the decision, two months later, to use asphalt as the future mode of paving the streets![53]

In November 1855, the Parliamentary Committee of Town Council recommended that the Council assume the powers of the Highway Surveyors. The Leeds Intelligencer maintained a strategic ambivalence on the issue noting that the Board of Surveyors was improving its method of paving the streets and that the Town Council was having less success in an area of similar concern - the removal of the smoke nuisance. It was pointed out that the Surveyors would "naturally object to be consigned to the old lumber room of effete and exploded dynasties".[54] The Leeds Mercury acknowledged that the Board members had been almost exclusively Chartists for many years but emphasized the fact that the suggested transfer of authority from the Surveyors had not been due to dissatisfaction with the manner in which they had exercised their power. It was inconvenient to have two bodies involved in road repairs, with the Council being responsible for streets and the Board of Highway Surveyors being charged with the maintenance of roads which had been designated as highways.[55]

A vestry meeting which was held on 13 December to consider the proposed transfer of powers was not well attended. As might be expected from one who had invested much time and energy in the Board, albeit not as a member, Councillor Newton sprang to its defence. Councillor Carter argued that the whole of the town's business should be no more centered in the town council than the whole of the country's affairs be centered in the Government. Thomas Jones, who like Newton and Carter was a signatory to the circular which had called for the establishment of a party of 'advanced Liberals', seconded a Carter resolution which called upon Council not to disturb the powers of the Surveyors. Jones pointed out the obvious when he commented that Council was seeking not so much to disturb the Surveyors as to destroy them as a body! Vestry meetings were held in Holbeck and Hunslet because it was proposed that Council should also assume the powers of the Boards of Highway Surveyors for those districts. Carter, who represented Holbeck on town council, attended the meeting in that ward. Not surprisingly, the Holbeck meeting passed a resolution which favoured the retention of highway maintenance responsibilities in the hands of the township's Board of Surveyors and the Hunslet vestry meeting produced a similar result.

At a town council meeting which considered the proposed Leeds Improvement Act Amendments Bill, the move to assume the powers of the

Highway Surveyors was thwarted when, upon the motion of Councillor Carter duly seconded by Councillor Newton, the applicable clauses were struck out. Whatever merits there may have been in the attempt to transfer road maintenance powers to the Town Council, it was not a propitious moment to choose when those most interested in the survival of the Board of Surveyors were also involved in the establishment of a political association of 'advanced Liberals'.

The annual meeting to consider the accounts and to elect a Board for the year 1856-57 was conducted in fifteen minutes and the _status quo_ was maintained. During the period 1852-53 to 1856-57, there was an opportunity for ninety-five individuals to be elected to Board membership. If 'new Surveyor' is defined as any member who is elected to the Board and who has not served previously in the period under consideration, a net total of twenty-four new Surveyors were elected. The average twenty-five percent change in Board membership shows that even though control was maintained exclusively by the Chartist group, there were opportunities for several different members of the group to participate in politics. Indifference shown by the Liberals and Conservatives in some years was counterbalanced, in others, by unsuccessful attempts to make changes in the membership of the Board. While the Conservatives had been involved with the Liberals in a major attempt to wrest control of the Board from the Chartists, the most serious threat to the Highway Surveyors had come from the Liberal-dominated town council when the very existence of the Board had been questioned.

IV

In October 1852, the Poor Law Board revealed that it had considered

Inspector Farnall's report on the elections of Guardians in the North and Kirkgate wards. It concluded that

> informalities and irregularities of the grossest description took place in reference to the voting papers and the election generally, and the manner in which the voting papers were collected, lost, and tampered with, reflects the greatest discredit on all the persons responsible for the due legality and due conduct of the election.56

The Leeds Times called upon M.T. Baines to secure an alteration in the method by which Guardians were elected and it felt that as a former President of the Poor Law Board, Baines was uniquely qualified to bring the matter to the attention of Parliament. Baines was probably thankful that he was out of office when the official report was issued and he made no attempt to pursue the suggestion of the Leeds Times.[57] The Poor Law Board left it to the petitioners of the North and Kirkgate wards to decide whether there should be a detailed scrutiny of the votes and the inquiry desired by the North ward group commenced on 29 November 1852. Farnall's investigation lasted twelve days and more than two-hundred witnesses were questioned. The Leeds Intelligencer sought to make the best case it could for a losing cause by suggesting that the motives for pursuing the investigation were based upon a desire to "maintain an offensive agitation against the Conservative party up to the eve of the next . . . (Guardian's) election".[58]

As the result of the investigation, the Poor Law Board overturned the election of the two Conservative candidates, one of whom was Richard Stead, in February 1853. The court of revision for electors for the Board of Guardians was also held in February and the Conservatives showed that they intended to struggle to retain their supremacy. John Beckwith, the Clerk to the Guardians, refused to let the Reform

Registration Association agent see the list of five hundred objections to voters which was to be presented on behalf of the Conservatives by Richard Moat. Thomas Morgan's list contained approximately three hundred objections but he proved himself master of the situation and ensured that Liberal claims were sustained by securing the attendance at the Revision Court of all the Liberal owners who were to make claims. The Conservatives concentrated on objections and neglected to secure the attendance of their supporters to ensure that their own claims would be upheld. They were placed in the position of summoning them to the court at the last minute. Several of the Conservatives thus summoned were influential in the party and were displeased both with the procedure and with John Beckwith who had indirectly caused their attendance. He reversed his position and allowed an examination of the lists of objections but the damage had been done - to his own party rather than to the Liberal party.

For the 1853 election, the Board of Guardians voted to recruit collectors of voting papers who had either not served in that capacity before, or against whom there were no other objections. The election itself was noted as being quite unparalleled in Leeds, or in any other borough, because there was a keen contest in every ward.[59] Although the contest itself lasted one week, the clerk to the Guardians took an additional three weeks to ascertain the results. The Liberals captured every seat and for four of them (John Botterill, Thomas Brumfit, Thomas W. George and James Reffitt), the election turned out to be a stepping stone to securing seats on Town Council. John Wilson, who was also mayor for 1853-54, was one of the new Guardians elected and the ubiquitous Robert Meek Carter was elected as a Guardian in the North ward.

The Leeds Mercury accounted for the Liberal victory by acknowledging Morgan's efforts at the registration court but it also noted the apathy amongst the Conservative voters which was due, it claimed, to the disgust they felt at the revelations of the Poor Law Board inquiry.[60]

A public meeting was held on 30 May 1853, at which it was resolved to petition Parliament to secure a reform of the system used to elect Poor Law Guardians. While the petition did not succeed, the frauds practised in Leeds were brought to the attention of the House of Lords by Lord Monteagle on 9 February 1854, when he used them as an argument against Lord Shaftesbury's proposal to have Members of Parliament elected by the same system.[61] The débâcle of the 1853 revision court was not repeated in 1854 because the Conservatives, with Henry Lampen acting as party agent, were much more moderate in their objections and the net result was a gain of thirteen electors to the Conservative party. Seven Conservative Guardians were returned in the 1854 election and so the Liberals lost their stranglehold on the Board after only one year. However, the voting system continued to be cause for comment and the Leeds Times reported that

> . . . influential gentlemen of the borough seriously contemplate making an alteration of the system a sine qua non of their future support to the President of the Poor Law Board as member for Leeds.62

It was noted that the system which was used inevitably resulted in abuses and, once again, voting papers belonging to both parties had disappeared. Former Conservative Guardians were also vocal in their disapprobation of the system and expressed a wish to see it abolished.[63]

Their minority position on the Board did not prevent the Conservatives from taking Board issues to the public. Although a motion to build a new workhouse was defeated upon an amendment of the Liberal David Newton, it had required the votes of most of the Conservatives to ensure its defeat. The Conservative group, flushed with their success and confident that they had a popular political issue, established the Leeds Ratepayers' Public Economy Association. The objective of the Association was to oppose the lavish expenditure of public money by any body, and the new waterworks, a new town hall and the sewerage scheme were all criticized.[64] While the Association does not appear to have sustained its momentum for long, it is another indication of a revitalized Conservative group in the borough and the Association was resurrected by the party from time to time in succeeding years.

The evidence available from the Liberal press suggests that the members of that party had lost interest in the Board of Guardians by the time that the nominations for 1855 election were being sought.[65] Not only were the Liberal voters apathetic but even David Newton protested at his own re-nomination since he had no wish to serve again and John Marshall, flax merchant and manufacturer, could not be induced to let his name be put forward for nomination. The Conservatives had fewer problems with the nomination of their candidates - especially in the North East ward where four Conservatives ran for the two seats! One of the candidates was Richard Moat, the fruiterer, who had played an active role in previous Guardians' elections and was seeking re-election. The record of the election in the North-East ward provided by the Leeds Mercury shows that the Conservatives used the same tactics against each other which in previous elections they had used against the Liberals.[66] Moat, whose skill in manipulation of voting papers had been honed, supposedly, during the infamous election of 1852, was returned at the bottom of the poll, but he was compensated for his loss in November 1855, when he and his wife were appointed Master and Matron of the Mendicity Office. There were contests in only three of the eight wards in 1855 and the Liberals were reduced to four seats on the eighteen-seat Board.

It is interesting to note the inter-connection between the town council and the Board during the 1854-57 period. In 1854-55, the Board had five Liberal and two Conservative councillors as members; on the Boards of 1855-56 and 1856-57 there were four Conservative and two Liberal councillors. The elections of 1853 had provided some of the Liberals with a start to their political careers but it appears that they lost interest during the course of their first year on the Board and the lack of a continuing commitment is evidence, perhaps, of a self-serving approach on their part. There seems to have been as little prestige for them on the Board of Guardians as there would have been on the Board of Highway Surveyors. At the organizational level, the lack of Liberal interest is evidenced by their failure to have a representative to guard their position on the register at the revision court of 1856. As usual, the Leeds Mercury decried the voting system and the abuses it produced but it is clear that deficient organization was at least partially responsible for the lack of Liberal success.[67]

In 1856, fourteen Conservatives were returned but a Conservative split which had developed in the previous year, continued during 1856-57. In 1855-56, Richard Stead, the Chairman, who was not in favour of building a new workhouse, had been opposed by Leonard Hicks and a minority Conservative group. Stead, in turn, had cast the deciding vote against the appointment of Hicks' brother as the pay clerk of the Board. Hicks continued to press for a new workhouse in 1856-57 although he had to do it without the assistance of Thomas Phillips who had been major supporter the previous year. Phillips had been forced from his Kirkgate seat by another Conservative candidate in the 1856 election: Stead, however, retained his seat in that ward.[68] While the Conservatives held the majority position on the Board in 1856-57 it had not been a lack of opposition during the election which had made them complacent enough to indulge in internal bickering. Contests had taken place in six of the eight wards. Several wards had more nominees from one party than there were seats available. In the North ward, four Conservatives and one Liberal fought for two seats. Five Conservatives and four Liberals sought election for three seats in the West ward and in Kirkgate ward three Conservatives and four Liberals campaigned for election to two seats. The 1856 elections for Poor Law Guardians witnessed the largest number of candidates in any of the elections held between 1852 and 1857.[69] Since both parties experienced a surfeit of candidates in two or three of the wards it would appear that party control was becoming less effective but there is no hint from the press about the cause of the situation. While the Leeds Intelligencer regretted the division in Conservative ranks and urged compromise to avoid improving the chances of the Liberals, the Leeds Mercury made the strange comment that the apathy amongst the Liberals regarding the election of Guardians exceeded that of any recent year![70]

In 1857, the Liberals were again without party representation at the revision court but David Richardson, the Conservative registration agent, was there. It was quite evident that the Liberals were making a minimum effort when it was revealed later that many ratepayers found themselves disfranchised simply because they had not selected the ward in which they wished to vote.[71] The writ for the 1857 parliamentary election was received on 22 March for an election which was held six days later and the closing day for nominations for the Poor Law elections was the 27 March. Conservatives Guardians made sure that they basked in the glory of Robert Hall's election victory and at a banquet held on 2 April 1857, he acknowledged the efforts which members of the group had made on his behalf during the parliamentary election. Richard Stead took the chair and Leonard Hicks was vice-chairman for the occasion![72]

Hicks continued to be a controversial figure in the 1857 Guardians' election and the Leeds Mercury expressed its regret when he was re-elected. The Leeds Times reveals how the "wealthiest and most influential" ward could be manipulated to provide a political base for an unpopular candidate. Mill Hill ward was, by virtue of its central location, in the business area of Leeds but people who owned commercial property or occupied business premises there often resided in other wards in Leeds township or in the suburbs. Owners were induced to give their proxies for the ward to the Conservative party - which, at this period, meant Leonard Hicks and Richard Moat. Hicks was elected by a total of 368 votes but only 83 votes were given directly by ratepayers; the remainder of the votes being given by proxy. Hicks did not, however, manage to retain his position as vice-chairman of the Board.[73] Proxy votes also played an important part in returning two Conservatives for the North ward where Robert Meek Carter was seeking re-election after a two-year absence. The Liberals succeeded in placing seven of their candidates on the Board; three Liberals who had sought election for the West ward in 1856 replaced the three Conservative incumbents.

Henry Lampen, who had owed his appointment as Clerk to the Guardians to his Conservative party connections, made it clear that he took his duties seriously and he was evidently no cipher for the party. During an investigation of the voting papers for the North ward he commented that

> he had no doubt whatever that the great mass of these proxy papers were forgeries . . . (and that) so long as he was returning officer . . . no such royal road to fraud should be left open.[74]

One suspects that Lampen spoke with the concurrence of the more respectable members of the Conservative party and it is probable that having proved themselves able to elect a Conservative Member of Parliament without the opportunity to use the methods employed to elect Guardians, they found the manipulation for the local election *infra dignitatem*.[75] Lampen's statement did not pass unnoticed by the *Leeds Mercury* and once again it urged an official inquiry into the elections for Guardians by the Poor Law Board.[76] A memorial to the Poor Law Board requesting an inquiry was delivered by a deputation on 12 May 1857. Fortunately for the Conservatives it did not take place before the parliamentary bye-election of 5 June and so it was not a factor which worked against them as it had in the election of 1852.

An attempt to show the amount of "new blood" which was infused into the Board membership during the period 1852-57 is distorted somewhat by the swing to the Liberals in 1853 and the return to a Conservative dominated Board in 1855. Significantly, eight Conservatives who were elected in 1855 had not served previously during the period and this suggests, perhaps, that the party hierarchy had decided that new faces were required in order to re-establish credibility with the ratepayers. The five-year period 1852-57 would have enabled ninety individuals a chance to sit as members of the Board. Forty-four individuals, occupying forty-eight percent of the seats available, were "new" Guardians who were elected during the period. Without the renewed energy of the Liberals and the response by the Conservatives, the change in Board membership would, of course, have been significantly lower.

V

Reference has already been made to the establishment of a political association of "the more advanced Liberal party in the borough of Leeds". The fourteen signatories of the circular which was issued to call a meeting for 5 November 1855, included several who had been or were members of either the town council or Board of Highway Surveyors. John Ardill, who failed in his bid for re-election to council in 1855 had been variously employed as a brass moulder, chief clerk for the Northern Star for a lengthy period - until he had quarrelled with Feargus O'Connor - a milk seller, and was a card manufacturer when the advanced Liberal party was established.[77] Councillor David Newton was a wool merchant who had played a significant role in the annual elections of highway surveyors. John Patterson, a commercial traveller, who became a tanner and leather dresser, took an active part in municipal politics and was a Chartist town councillor. Robert Meek Carter, the coal merchant, who was both a member of town council and a highway surveyor at the time of the formation of the new political association had also recently completed a term as a guardian. George Robson, a butcher, who like Ardill had served as a Chartist town councillor was a highway surveyor at the time that the "advanced Liberals" established their organization. John Shaw and Samuel Stone, bath keeper and canvass and sail maker, respectively, were serving as highway surveyors.[78]

At the organizational meeting, which attracted an audience of about sixty people, David Green suggested that the terms 'Radical' and 'Chartist' had gone out of use and that "higher aims ought to be attempted in the present generation". However, he suggested, the new organization should have a larger measure of political enfranchisement and the education of the people as two of its goals. A discussion about the possibility of support from the Whigs and Liberals led several speakers to contend that there was no sympathy between the various bodies and that the West Riding Registration Association was a "snug family party", uninfluenced by the opinions of the Radicals. It was suggested that an association should be formed which comprised electors and non-electors and should have as its object the political advancement of the people.[79] A committee was appointed to consider the bases of the new association and it reported its findings on 21 November. John Ardill presided at a meeting of about fifty people and the first six bases of the "creed" of the association were agreed without difficulty. The first item which produced any disagreement was one which sought the reform of the existing relations between church and state but the clause was eventually removed.[80]

On 26 November, the association devoted the whole of its meeting to the discussion of a clause which supported a national system of secular education under local control. This clause caused difficulty because it was recognized that its adoption would lose support for the fledgling association. On the other hand, its abandonment would be seen by some as inappropriate since education would be "one of the main points required of every candidate who presented himself before the constituency". It is clear that the education clause would have created not only a split within the association but would also have jeopardized the chance of support from some of those in the traditional Liberal group. The question of the extent to which religious education should be included in day schools and the issue of local versus central control also conspired to make it inevitable that the clause on education was deleted from the programme of the Advanced Liberal Association.[81]

A second adjourned meeting held on 3 December removed the abolition of the laws of entail and primogeniture as one of the bases of the association's constitution and the last clause to be approved was one which called for purity in the election of municipal representatives and efficiency and economy in the management of local affairs. It has already been suggested above that a factor which led to the formation of the new political association in Leeds was the frustration being experienced by the Chartist candidates at the municipal level of politics. The final clause is evidence of this. Furthermore, the brief accounts of the meeting reported in the Leeds Mercury included the following:

> Several gentlemen gave their experience of coruruption and bribery practised at the recent municipal election, and condemned more particularly the holding of preliminary meetings of election committees at public houses.[82]

The perpetrators of the corruption were not named and one can assume that the Liberals as well as the Conservatives were implicated. The Leeds Times felt that in addition to an efficient chairman and persevering secretary, an absence of both personal attacks and disorderly meetings would be required to ensure future success of the new association.[83] The latter characteristics had been prominent features in the recent municipal elections in wards which had involved competition between Liberal and Chartist candidates. After the initial meeting, John Ardill, the candidate who had been deserted by the Liberals in the West ward municipal election in 1855, acted as chairman of the meetings of the Association. While the Association might not appear to have been active after the organizational meetings if the columns of the Leeds press are any guide, it was Councillor Carter who proposed W.E. Forster as a fit and proper person to be presented to the electors of Leeds. Forster was the candidate of the advanced Liberals.

VI

Ten weeks after the general election of 28 March 1857, Leeds underwent a bye-election due to the death of Robert Hall. The dominant feature of both elections was the division which occurred in the 'party of all shades'.

In his biography of Forster, T. Wemyss Reid acknowledged that Baines and Forster had "engaged in more than one lively passage at arms . . . upon the merits of a national system of education".[84] Forster had often spoken and lectured in Leeds and he was a partner in a Bradford woollen manufacturing firm. He was a suitable candidate for the 'Radicals' of Leeds because he shared their views on parliamentary reform and he was also an advocate of state-supported education. Wemyss Reid discusses the 1857 elections in four and a half pages in a biography with over one thousand pages of text. It is not surprising that a former editor of the Leeds Mercury would devote so little space to that period of his subject's life. Nevertheless, it is to Wemyss Reid's credit that he acknowledged Forster's chances of success were denied on both occasions by the "antagonism of the Leeds Nonconformists and of their distinguished leader, Mr. Baines".[85]

On 9 February 1857, the Leeds Express announced that Sir George Goodman wished to resign his seat in Parliament and that W.E. Forster was being sought as a candidate. Three days later the Leeds Mercury denied that Goodman would resign and that "the speculations founded upon this fiction are equally baseless". On the same day, Goodman was granted leave of absence from the Commons on account of ill health.[86] The Intelligencer insisted that Goodman's resignation had been in the hands of his friends and supporters for some time.[87] Meanwhile, the Leeds Times lost no time in promoting W.E. Forster and declared:

> We must have no more nonsense from that section of the Liberal party who wish to cram their literature, their politics, and their religion by force down our throats (and) . . . if . . . the Liberal cause is divided then the onus of responsibility must rest upon that section of the party we have indicated.88

At the end of February a voluntaryist dominated delegation was despatched to London for the purpose of "beating up amongst the clubs some man whose views may accord with their own".[89] On 10 March, the Leeds Mercury revealed that two meetings "of the gentlemen who usually take an active part on such occasions" had been held. At the first meeting, M.T. Baines was selected as a candidate and at the second it was reported that Samuel Morley, secretary of the Administrative Reform Association and chairman of the Religious Toleration Society had declined to stand as the other candidate. It was decided that Francis Carbutt would be the second Liberal candidate and while the Leeds Mercury claimed that Carbutt belonged to the more advanced section of the party it avoided mentioning that he was a supporter of voluntary education.[90] Carbutt had been nominated by Edward Baines as a potential Liberal candidate in the 1852 election. Since then the sixty-four year old Carbutt had resigned his seat as an alderman on 10 October 1856 and had claimed that his infrequent attendance at Council during the previous two years had been caused by the pressure of other duties and the unsatisfactory state of his health.[91] At the time of Carbutt's nomination it appears that criticism was also being levelled at M.T. Baines and the editors of the Leeds Mercury commented that it was unfortunate that a Minister for a popular constituency had to keep much of what he did a secret. They explained:

> He is also compelled to exercise greater reserve in his speeches and votes than if he had no such responsibility. He must therefore rely upon the consideration of intelligent and reflecting men.92

On Tuesday, 10 March, a meeting was called by the advanced Liberals in order to establish Forster as one of the Liberal candidates. The Leeds Mercury was careful to point out that the majority of those in attendance at the meeting were non-electors.[93] Forster explained to the crowd of 1,500 that in September, when he had first been approached to stand as a candidate, he had inquired whether Carbutt would be running! Carbutt had also been a member of the delegation which had sought a suitable candidate in London and he had reconfirmed that ill-health would prevent him from presenting himself as a candidate. After outlining his platform Forster said that it would be a mistake if the Liberal party allowed the question of education to become the touchstone of the election. He felt that if the gentlemen who opposed a system of national education were successful in the Leeds election they could not expect the country to undo what had been done thus far. Forster linked Edward Baines' name to the voluntaryist group. In an editorial Baines expressed his regret that Forster had allowed himself to be brought forward by a group of extreme radicals. Those responsible for the meeting had acted

> in express contradiction to the decision of a meeting of the gentlemen who usually bear the burden of registration and of liberal movements in this Borough.94

It was made clear that it would be the Liberal electors who would decide on the candidates at a meeting to be held on Friday, 13 March.

The meeting revealed the fundamental difference of opinion upon the manner in which the 'party of all shades' was held together. In his nomination speech for Carbutt, Edward Baines took the opportunity to review his version of the *modus vivendi* which had been developed. Due to the many different shades in the party, he declared, there had been an understanding of twenty-five years' duration that each great section of the party should have a representative. The split on education which had occurred in 1847 had been resolved in 1852 by a compact whereby the Liberals should have one candidate who favoured government education and the other candidate the voluntary system.

Councillor Carter denied that there had been a compact on the education issue. He revealed that at meetings held months before, the replacment of Sir George Goodman was discussed and that although it was considered desirable that a Voluntary should be carried, several possible candidates had been approached, all of whom were State Educationists. In February, when the deputation had called upon Mr. Morley in London, the members had been surprised to find Edward Baines with Mr. Morley trying to "assist in overcoming Mr. Morley's difficulties". The deputation had also inquired about possible candidates who were State Educationists and these facts showed that there was no compact. Carter's comments confirm that the Leeds Mercury had deliberately denied the likelihood that Goodman was retiring months after it was known to Edward Baines that there would be a replacement. One might conclude that Baines did it to confuse the Conservatives but it seems more likely that he was attempting to delay open discussion in Liberal ranks. Baines' actions in London lend support to that supposition and confirm his determination to secure a Voluntaryist candidate.

After the candidates had spoken, Lloyd Jones, a leader in the advanced Liberal group, tried to determine that all would abide by the vote taken at the meeting but his motion failed. M.T. Baines and W.E. Forster received the largest show of hands yet Carbutt announced that he would place the decision about whether he would retire from the contest entirely in the hands of his friends. The Leeds Mercury reported that many non-electors had been in the room and noted the reluctance of the majority at the meeting to pledge itself to be bound by the vote. The course which the party would pursue would be decided by the "most active and influential men of the party".[95] To the Leeds Times it was clear that anyone who interfered with the decision of the meeting to support M.T. Baines and Forster was a traitor to the Liberal cause. As far as the journal of the advanced Liberals was concerned every effort had been made to find a candidate who would suit Edward Baines and his personal friends better than Mr. Forster. It was suggested that Francis Carbutt had been promoted by Baines' group on the understanding that he would hold the seat only until Samuel Morley was available ten or twelve months later. The strategy had been adopted, it was claimed, in order to prevent Forster's nomination. It its editorial the Leeds Times placed the blame on Edward Baines and declared

> Leeds is not anybody's pocket borough - there is no right anywhere to bargain away this great constituency . . . . Mr. Baines, if he attempts to do such a thing, must do so at his peril.[96]

Edward Baines, it was pointed out, had his brother as a Whig candidate and he should be satisfied with that.

The Leeds Intelligencer added a new dimension to the dispute in the Liberal ranks by repeating a rumour that even the Whig section of the party was dissatisfied with Edward Baines, and that William Beckett, the former Leeds Conservative M.P., had been suggested as a candidate. It appears, then, that it was not merely a case of the "Radicals *alias* Chartists" coming into collision with Edward Baines.[97] The Conservative newspaper could adopt a smug attitude because the Leeds Conservatives experienced no dissension in their ranks. Robert Hall had made it clear from 1852 that he would offer himself as a candidate and the Conservative Association had confirmed his selection at a meeting held on 10 March 1857.

On 14 March, Forster withdrew his candidacy when he learned that he would not get the support of Carbutt's friends. Carbutt's candidacy was, in turn, withdrawn at a meeting of approximately 150 Liberal electors on 16 March and there was a great deal of criticism about the manner in which Carbutt had been promoted with all speakers condemning the way in which Forster had been treated.[98] A committee of five were elected - two from each of the former candidates' supporters and an umpire - to select a candidate who would be supported by all Liberal electors.[99] The committee spent two days in London searching for a suitable candidate and John Remington Mills was approved unanimously at a meeting of approximately 150 Liberal electors on 20 March. The Leeds Mercury failed to report that Forster's supporters continued to challenge the dominance of the Reform Registration Association and that several of his adherents had left before the vote of approval was taken. Meanwhile, the Conservatives had been very active and the Leeds Mercury urged Liberals to elect both their candidates in order to ensure the future harmonious working of the party in the town.[100] The Leeds Times ensured that the voices of the dissatisfied advanced Liberals would continue to be heard. It reiterated its complaint about the selection of candidates resting in the hands of a few and printed a long letter from "A Leeds Elector" which recounted inconsistencies in Baines' position dating from 1843! On the day of the election it printed a copy of an election squib which had been extensively posted around the town. The squib's author had condemned the control exercised by the Voluntaries over the Registration Association and had urged Radical electors to be neutral.[101]

J.R. Mills, who had retired from the silk trade a wealthy man, had residences in London and Scarborough. He was a Congregationalist and a supporter of the Voluntary education movement and so had a similar background to Edward Baines. At the meeting which was called to present Mills to Liberal electors his responses to questions led Lloyd Jones to protest that Mills differed from Forster on only the education issue. Jones condemned the manner in which the electors had been treated and warned that if the election were lost the parties who had treated them badly would be at fault. Nevertheless, Mills was adopted as the second Liberal candidate with only two dissenting votes.[102]

Two days prior to the election the Leeds Mercury ran an editorial which revealed the issues upon which some voters were deciding their choice of candidates. Leeds Roman Catholics were apparently being influenced by a rumour that Mills was opposed to the parliamentary grant to Maynooth College.[103] Baines said that Mills had been a steady supporter of Catholic Emancipation but that Hall had been one of its opponents. In response to a letter from a Liberal elector which condemned the bombardment of Canton, Baines was quick to point out that all three candidates supported the government on the issue and neither of the Liberal candidates thought that the election should be fought on the single issue of the China question.[104] Finally, the rumour had been circulated among the licensed victuallers that Palmerston's government was favourable to opening the liquor trade to unrestricted competition and the newspaper reminded Liberals that M.T. Baines and Mills were opposed to any form of prohibition or any attempt to close public houses on Sundays.[105] As is shown by the analysis of the voting of innkeepers and beersellers the 1857 election witnessed a dramatic reversal in the party allegiance of that group.

Two hundred Leeds licensed victuallers had formed a society on

2 June 1853, in response to the movement to close public houses and inns on Sundays. The majority of those at the meeting were so incensed with the stand taken by the Leeds Mercury that it was decided to advertise the resolutions adopted by the Society only in the other two newspapers.[106] Yet for Edward Baines the issue of Sunday opening was not simply a part of his teetotalism but was also bound up with his struggle to enforce Sabbath observance which at the local level led, in January 1854, to the closure of the Leeds Commercial news room on Sundays. It was soon pointed out that the local leaders of the "Sabbatarian" movement, who were also leaders of the voluntary movement, presented a strange spectacle calling for government restriction in some areas and voluntaryism in education and religion.[107] The Leeds Times felt no hesitation in declaring that

> Mr. Baines is a "narrow puritan", a "self-righteous man", and . . . if he had lived in the days of the Saviour he would probably have gone with the Pharisees, and written leaders against the Lord for healing the sick . . . on the Sabbath.108

The newspaper suggested that Baines lacked the statesmanship to recognize that opening such places as the Crystal Palace on Sundays would help to draw the drunken and depraved from their drink and depravity.[109]

In Leeds, the brewster sessions for 1853 had provided the usual occasion for the Mayor to summarize the complaints made against innkeepers and beerhouse proprietors and the statistics were not flattering to the latter group.[110] The propensity of the beershops to attract the criminal elements and "females of a certain class" had destroyed the original purpose for which they were established. It had been hoped that they would act as outlets of cheap beer which would be purchased by the working men for consumption at home. The Leeds Intelligencer joined the outcry against the beerhouse nuisance partly, no doubt, because of the scandals associated with some beerhouses but also, perhaps, because the beerhouses were direct competition for the established liquor interests.[111] The beersellers of Leeds followed the example of the licensed victuallers and decided to organize the Leeds Beerseller's Protective Society in April 1854, in order to act in concert with those established in other towns. The stimulus for the creation of the Society had been the establishment, in the previous month, of a select House of Commons Committee whose mandate was the examination of the system by which beerhouses were licensed. Sir George Goodman was a member of the select committee.

The issue of closing public houses on Sundays attracted one of the largest crowds ever assembled in Leeds. It was estimated that twenty thousand people gathered on 12 June 1854, to consider whether to petition Parliament in favour of a bill prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquors on Sunday. It was a noisy meeting, the result of which was somewhat inconclusive. William Spirett, secretary to the Leeds Licensed Victuallers' Society, tried to amend the motion which sought Sunday closing, but the mayor's decision on the show of hands was that the amendment was lost. Edward Baines claimed victory for the petitioners, while the Leeds Intelligencer claimed that the vast majority at the meeting had not heard or understood the question when it was put and that the mayor had been incorrect when he had declared that the amendment had been lost. The most significant result of the meeting from the point of view of Leeds politics was that Baines, not content to be magnanimous in victory, charged that the publicans had been responsible for indecent violence, had gathered degraded persons to support them, and that the public eye was upon them. He warned that a meeting which had been called for Monday 19 June, to consider the entire prohibition of the sale of intoxicating liquors, might gain significant support as a result of the conduct of the publicans and they should beware "lest a more serious infliction should come upon them than the loss of the ill-gotten gains of Sunday".[112] When the House of Commons select committee reported that it favoured restricting the hours of opening public houses but also supported the Sunday opening of the Crystal Palace and other places, Baines argued that consistency should be achieved by shutting public houses, not by opening places devoted to amusement.[113]

A deputation from the Licensed Victuallers' Society met Sir George Goodman and M.T. Baines on 27 October 1854. While Goodman showed sympathy and was prepared for the meeting, Baines claimed that he was unprepared due to the burden of official duties and that until he had entered the room for the meeting he was not award of its precise objects! He would retain the "interesting information" which was presented to the Leeds Members for consideration. In short, the licensed victuallers could not have been impressed with Baines' performance.[114] Peter Fairbairn acted as chairman at the first annual meeting of the Leeds Licensed Victuallers' Protection Society which was held on 19 January 1855. He condemned the restrictions imposed on Sunday opening hours and declared his surprise at the course taken on the issue by the editors of the Leeds Mercury. He noted his support for the position of the editors on the education issue but could not understand why they had advocated government interference in the case of licensed victuallers. Goodman was present but M.T. Baines excused his own absence by pleading that his position as a magistrate was the reason for his declining the invitation to attend. Aldermen Hepper and Kelsall, two Liberals, were the vice-chairmen for the meeting. It is evident that the stand taken by the Leeds Mercury was not approved by several important leaders in the Liberal group.[115]

On the 22 January 1855, Edward Baines was a member of a deputation which met Goodman for the purpose of pressing a case for the closing of public houses on Sundays "except for the proper entertainment of travellers".[116] Edward Baines chaired a meeting of the Leeds Ladies Temperance Association on 9 November 1855, at which he gave his testimony on the virtues of temperance. Alcohol, he said, was "a treacherous friend, a malignant enemy, a subtle poisoner, a midnight assassin . . . the foulest blot on our national character".[117] One year later, Baines urged stricter control of beer houses and reported that many of the beerhouses were actually brothels and that three-quarters of Leeds' beerhouses were of a "fearfully bad character".[118] The Leeds Times argued that the restrictive approach being suggested by Baines was incorrect and that the beer and liquor trade should be thrown open so that all who wished to participate should be allowed a publican's license - with control resting in the hands of the magistrates. Edward Baines was identified as one of those who was assisting in the preparation of a proposal to amend the Beer Act.[119] At a meeting of the Leeds Licensed Victuallers' Protection Society resolutions were passed in support of the stricter control of beerhouses. Baines chose to interpret the action of the victuallers as support for the efforts of his group. However, the victuallers were supporting their own vested interests rather than Baines . Certainly, from a political perspective it was unfortunate for Baines if he assumed that his years of opposition to the liquor interest would be forgotten and that the support which was given by the licensed victuallers to the Beer Act amendment was evidence of his absolution.[120]

Thus, it is clear, opposition to Edward Baines rested upon several bases; his role as a leader of the group which controlled the selection of parliamentary candidates; his stubborn advocacy of voluntaryism; his opposition to the liquor interest; and his support of sabbatarianism. Within the Liberal party in Leeds Baines was the focal point for forces ranged on both sides of the issues. It was, perhaps, fortunate for Leeds Liberals that the 1857 election was the first to be fought under the Corrupt Practices at Elections Prevention Act. The Leeds Mercury was able to explain the absence of noise and bustle and the "apparent want of spirit" as being due to the influence of the Act. There is, of course, some truth to the claim especially with respect to the absence of bands, flags and banners. Nevertheless, one suspects that the newspaper was content to have a lower level of activity since an election fought without the restraining influence of the Act would have given the electors and non-electors of the "advanced Liberal" group as much opportunity as any other party, to advertise their cause.[121]

At the hustings a small crowd had assembled by the time that nomination proceedings had started.[122] Heavy rains had fallen for several days preceding the nomination and had left Woodhouse Moor, where the hustings were located, a quagmire of mud. The state of the ground undoubtedly led to the collapse of part of the hustings upon which supporters of M.T. Baines and Mills stood. The Leeds Mercury later claimed that the injuries to the gentlemen who had been on the hustings prevented the return of both Liberal candidates! In his nomination speech Robert Hall linked the editors of the Leeds Mercury with the Voluntary movement which, he claimed, had been the principal obstacle to the spread of education. Hall also condemned the "dictational (sic) spirit of a section of Liberals" thereby making an obvious appeal to the advanced Liberals.[123] The show of hands went in favour of M.T. Baines and Hall and the poll subsequently confirmed the result:

M.T. Baines	2,329
R. Hall	2,237
J.R. Mills	2,143

A total of 4,361 voters had given 6,709 votes. Over two thousand voters had plumped for one of the three candidates - most of them, of course, for Hall the sole Conservative - but nearly four hundred voters had also split their votes between either Hall and Baines (7.7 percent) or Hall and Mills (1.3 percent). In summary, approximately forty-five percent of the electors had decided to use only one of their votes and nine percent of the electorate chose to split their votes between the Conservative and one of the Liberal candidates. In 1852, the plumpers had constituted 3.8 percent of the voters and those who split their votes were only 2.1 percent of the group of voters.[124]

The Leeds Times did not wait until after the election to apportion blame for what appeared to be an inevitable result. On election day, a letter titled "Political Slavery in Leeds" was published in the editorial column. The correspondent, "A Real Liberal", accused the Reform Registration Association of neglecting to guard the registration rights of people who did not agree with those "who have hitherto most improperly held the power in their own hands . . . (but) happily the influence of the Leeds Mercury is on the wane". In a leader the Leeds Times also condemned an Association which had become "little more than the convenient instrument of one individual will". Mr. E. Baines and his narrow-minded clique would be to blame if Mr. Hall were elected.[125]

In his apologia Baines claimed that Hall profited by being early in the field and by being a townsman. He suggested that Mills would have been elected if he had been nominated only one week earlier. This assertion is hardly plausible and was nullified by Baines' own analysis of other causes of the defeat. Presumably the injuries sustained from the collapse of the hustings would have had the same effect on the leadership in the wards whether or not Mills had been a candidate one week earlier. Baines claimed that conservative Whigs plumped for M.T. Baines, some Quakers refused to vote on the ground of the China question, some Roman Catholics and licensed victuallers supported Hall and even "some of the strongest Radicals and Chartists either voted for the Conservative candidate or refused to vote at all because they could not have Mr. Forster". In addition, the editor, who had been sure of Liberal supremacy on the register of electors prior to the election, declared that the state of the register had been uncertain! He argued that the last real contest had taken place in 1847 and since then several hundred new names had been added to the register of "persons whose politics were not known; and of these it may be that a large proportion were not Liberals"! Furthermore, Baines denied that he had either sought or exercised undue influence in the election.[126] His disclaimer might have been wise if he had been seeking to place dis tance between himself and a losing candidate but he did not desert Mills and there is no doubt that few in Leeds would have believed his claim to political impotence. The Leeds Times blamed Thomas Plint, the "well-paid servant" of the Reform Registration Association for the state of the register and the lack of organization in the wards. Edward Baines, "owing to his perverse and bigotted views" was asserted to be the cause of defections of Liberals who were registered as electors. The newspaper was pleased to announce that several leading and independent gentlemen were discussing the advisability of either forming an organization distinct from the Reform Registration Association or remodelling that Association.[127]

VII

After summing up his version of the reasons why the Liberals had failed to return two members in the 1857 borough election, Edward Baines expressed the hope that the party would reunite and suggested, prophetically, that perhaps an opportunity might present itself before too long for Leeds to have two Liberals in the House of Commons.[128] Robert Hall died of typhoid fever on 26 May but the opportunity presented itself too soon for the Liberals to have achieved reunification. As the Conservative newspaper noted, the "decease of Mr. Hall . . . created a great commotion among the Liberals of the Borough".[129]

The initial reaction of some of the Liberals was that all election activity should commence after Hall's funeral. The Conservatives agreed but the Liberals were unable to control the two factions within their own ranks. In response to two placards which appeared on the day of Hall's death nominating Forster as a candidate, Mills' supporters immediately rallied to their candidate. The Leeds Mercury threw its support behind Mills again, claiming that he had been selected by the Liberal party and had acquitted himself well in the general election. Mills' candidacy had been the means of healing the division in the party and Forster's nomination would re-open the breach. The newspaper warned that if two candidates were run against a Conservative candidate, the Conservative would win. The Leeds Times supported Forster again and in a restrained manner characterized the contest as being between "an elderly gentleman from London" and "an able and young man who lives amongst us".[130]

Mills' supporters organized their forces at a meeting held on 28 May and Forster's group held a meeting on the following evening. The Liberal electors met on Saturday 30 May. R.M. Carter attended Mills' meeting and recounted that while he had supported Mills in the general election he did not stand pledged to him for the bye-election. Mr. Forster was in London, he said, waiting upon Lord Palmerston as a member of a delegation which was seeking to place beershops on the same footing as licensed victuallers for purposes of inspection and licensing. Carter resurrected the spectre of a dictatorial clique by suggesting that a meeting on Tuesday morning at the Mercury office between Edward Baines, Darnton Lupton and Robert Adams, for the purpose of delaying election proceedings until after the funeral of Hall, was a conspiracy to prevent the electors of Leeds from acting how and when they pleased. Carter admitted that he had been exposed to great pressure when he had advised Forster to withdraw from the general election and he regretted having given that advice. Lloyd Jones declared that the Forster group had not broken a compact about restraining their campaigning. Forster's friends had given way once but they would not give way twice and intended to fight the battle to the end. At the meeting held on the following evening Forster explained his version of the reason why his supporters had entered him into the contest so early, declared that he was willing, with some reluctance, to accept vote by ballot, and urged people not to reject him as a candidate merely on the basis of his membership in the Church of England.[131]

Several of the key supporters of the voluntary and educationist Liberal candidates were those who had taken the same positions ten years earlier. Edward Baines, Thomas Plint and Peter Fairbairn supported Mills while James Garth Marshall, John Hope Shaw, James Hole, J.D. Luccock and John Lupton supported Forster.[132] The level of distrust between the two sides can be gauged by the agreement that Robert Barr, the Conservative clerk to the Leeds Justices, was asked to be chairman of the meeting of Liberal electors on 30 May. The definitions for "Liberal elector", the manner of admission to the meeting, and the requirement for the defeated candidate to withdraw from the election were agreed. Mills received between sixty and sixty-five percent of the votes at the meeting and he was duly elected as the Liberal candidate. Forster's supporters warned that Mills would not win at the poll. It was claimed that Thomas Plint had refused to grant Forster's supporters a circular of admission to the meeting if they had voted for Hall and Baines at the general election and would not promise to vote for Mills at the meeting of Liberal electors.[133]

The Conservatives too faced a serious problem in the bye-election. It had been Robert Hall who had stimulated the development of the

Conservative Association. Even after his election he had chided his supporters about deficiencies which remained in party organization at the ward level. He had suggested that the Liberals' assertion that they had a majority of five hundred electors on the register was not improbable.[134] His death left a vacuum because it occurred so suddenly and because he had obviously played an important part in party organization.

Thomas Sidney, who had allowed his name to stand with Hall's in 1852, issued an election address in which he indicated his willingness to become the Conservative candidate if he were asked. In spite of a visit to Leeds and attendance at the parish church on 31 May, his offer seems to have been unacceptable to the Conservative hierarchy which had despatched a deputation to London on 30 May. Sidney withdrew from the contest on 3 June. The deputation returned empty-handed and George Skirrow Beecroft, Hall's election committee chairman, was selected on 1 June. Beecroft, a member of town council for Headingley, had retired from partnership in an iron manufacturing firm in September 1855.[135]

At a meeting of his supporters on 3 June, Beecroft declared himself in favour of national education, the Maynooth grant, an end to Jewish disabilities, and an extension of the franchise to the "educated and intelligent portions of the community". When a working man suggested that some of the Liberal electors would vote for Beecroft if he agreed to an extension of the suffrage to a £5 rating in the boroughs and £10 in the counties, the candidate said that he was unable to support such a franchise "at present".[136] The Conservatives were, no doubt, encouraged in their efforts when the reunion of the Liberals claimed by the Leeds Mercury on 2 June seemed to be denied two days later by an appeal for union from the chairman of Mills' election committee. It is significant that none of the three former Forster supporters who were named as working zealously Mills' committee were "advanced Liberals". David Newton appears to be the only "advanced Liberal" who even joined the committee.[137]

The discrepancy between the estimates of the nomination day crowd by the newspapers is unusual. The Leeds Mercury, without doubt attempting to play down the vote, vaguely referred to more than twelve thousand, the Leeds Intelligencer suggested a crowd of between fifteen and twenty thousand while the organ of the advanced Liberals declared that thirty thousand had been present.[138] In seconding Mills' nomination, T.W. George, the chairman of the election committee, referred to "small differences" that existed between Liberals.

The education question was raised at the nomination and Beecroft declared himself in favour of equitable grants for educational purposes being distributed to all classes of dissenters. Mills, who was asked about whether he would withdraw grants from schools already receiving them, evaded the question. Beecroft's answer helped him to address two issues. At the meeting of Liberal electors a strong plea had been made to have a dissenter as the Liberal candidate because, it was claimed, the majority of the Liberal electors were dissenters. M.T. Baines, W.E. Forster and G.S. Beecroft were Anglicans. His reply on the education question enabled Beecroft to defuse the "dissenter" issue by his showing a willingness to give more state aid to the dissenters than Mills, the dissenter. The show of hands was declared to be in favour of Beecroft and he went on to victory at the poll with a total of 2,070 votes - six more than Mills.

Baines was quick to charge that some electors who had been considered reformers either supported Beecroft or remained neutral. He suggested that sectarian prejudice, intolerance in views on state education, or resentment at the defeat of Forster were motives for the actions of the erstwhile Liberals. Nevertheless, in spite of the narrow margin of loss, the Leeds Mercury denied that Mills was correct in asserting that there would be a scrutiny of the votes.[139] The Leeds Times declared the sectarian spirit of "some of the self-constituted leaders of the Liberal party" was the cause of Beecroft's return and noted that "a large section of the party" had been disgusted during recent years by that spirit. It was the tendency to subordinate political to sectarian objects that would break up the party irrevocably. Moreover, Edward Baines' support for any candidate would be fatal for the candidate. The newspaper also referred to an unfortunate gaffe made by Alderman Hepper at the meeting of Liberal electors when he suggested that Mills would give generously to Leeds charities if he were returned.[140]

The Conservative newspaper confessed that it had been Liberal intolerance which had returned Beecroft and a Liberal press war continued for a month after the election. A letter to the editor of the Leeds Times called for the removal of the affairs of the Liberal party from those who had control of it in order to prevent the cause of reform in Leeds being ruined by the Mercury. An editorial on 13 June suggested that Mills' supporters had only agreed that the candidate receiving the minority of votes at the selection meeting should be withdrawn. There had been no pledge of support to Forster were he to be successful. The administrative machinery of the Reform Registration

Society and the animus which inspired its councils were distrusted generally throughout the party.[141] The Society needed re-organising and liberalising. One week later a letter to the editor from "One Who Voted For Mills" told Baines:

> Leeds pays a high honour to your family. But don't want everything. 'My brother, for one; a man of my opinions for the other', - this is really becoming indigestible.[142]

Encouraged by the comments at a banquet held on 29 June to honour W.E. Forster, the Leeds Times continued its attack upon Edward Baines. Baines headed a "bigoted clique" and progress would be sacrificed to gratify the "insane crotchet of an enthusiast who runs amuck at every one who does not follow his nostrum". Baines was the "bitter oracle of Albion Street".[143] All shades of Liberals were represented at the banquet and some Conservatives attended. A letter from Dr. W.F. Hook the Conservative Vicar of Leeds was read in which he declared that he would have overlooked political differences and would have voted for Forster had he been a candidate. Forster took the opportunity to attack Baines for his effort to add an eighth voluntaryist to the House of Commons and thereby suggest that Leeds differed from the rest of the country on the education issue. He condemned Baines for disputing statistics on the advancement of education which had been presented by the Prince Consort! The issue of parliamentary reform had been gagged in Leeds by the voluntary education crotchet and the crotchet would have to be withdrawn or all parties would have to be prepared to make it a question upon which they went to the poll. Edward Baines fought back from the editor's desk and described Forster's speech as "defiant" and "contemptuous" and, if the tone was typical of those who supported

Forster, there was no possibility of reunion of the Liberals. In a recapitulation of events since the 1857 general election, Baines charged that Tories and non-electors were present at the meeting which resolved to support Forster. Baines declared himself content to be abused in the company of the Liberal party and that defeat with the party was preferable to "a dishonourable triumph by catching votes from political opponents".[144]

The final comments were made on 11 July. Baines stated that friendly co-operation, conciliation and concession would result in the registration of the Liberal party being carried on pleasantly. Lack of co-operation or desertion of one section by the other would, it was implied, result in registration difficulties. Baines would give the strongest opposition possible to an attempt by one section to trample upon the other section! The Leeds Times suggested that when Mr. Baines had recovered his temper he would see that his vituperation was not exactly the way to reunite the divided party.[145]

VIII

At the annual meeting of the Leeds Chamber of Commerce for 1855, Peter Fairbairn proposed that the Chamber prepare trade reports on a regular basis. The purpose of his proposal was to extend the press coverage of trade in the district to include more than just the woollen industry.[146] His suggestion was adopted and so the state of the various industries of Leeds is available from 1855 on a monthly basis. The Crimean War, of course, had an impact on Leeds since hemp was obtained from Russia and imports of all Russian produce were prohibited during the war. The first comprehensive trade report noted that the conditions of the operatives in the trade had become so distressing that it was necessary to re-open the Soup Kitchen which had been established approximately twelve years before in a period of similar trade stagnation.[147] The report also provides an indication of the versatility of the sectors of the Leeds economy by the comment that although the machinery-making industry had been without orders for flax and woollen machinery, attention had been turned to more general business. In any case, firms engaged in the manufacture of locomotives continued to be prosperous as were the various branches of the iron trade.[148] By April the Chamber was able to report that the worst of the depression in the woollen trade had passed and the Leeds iron trade continued to fare much better than the iron trade in other areas. This, in turn, of course, maintained employment rates in the local coal mines.[149] By August the flax trade had started to show signs of improvement and the leather trade, which had been somewhat depressed three months before, had benefited from the extensive government contracts which had been issued for war materiel.[150] During the latter months of 1855 there was increasing unemployment in some areas but the efforts of political agitators are reported to have caused no excitement among the working classes.[151]

On the basis of the information provided by the trade reports it is not possible to link the flurry of political activity in the ranks of the Liberals, in October 1855, to any widespread economic distress. It seems clear that the activities of the Radicals and Chartists were linked to displeasure with the operation of the Liberal party at the municipal level, which was exacerbated in December 1855 by the attempt to have the town council assume the powers of the highway surveyors.

The internal upheaval in the Liberal party was founded upon political disagreement and the split within the 'party of all shades' could not be averted at the parliamentary election because Edward Baines was intransigent on the education question. Leeds Liberals lost the general election of 1857 because of a combination of two factors; division in their own ranks and a determined and well-organized opponent. In the bye-election which followed it was only Liberal division which decided the poll in favour of the Conservative party.[152]

[1] *Leeds Intelligencer*, 12 February 1853.

[2] Ibid., 26 February, 5, 12 March 1853. The *Intelligencer* noted that the Freehold Land Societies established by their political opponents had resulted in the creation of over 15,000 county votes for the Liberals.

[3] *Leeds Times*, 12 March 1853. *Leeds Intelligencer*, 18 June 1853.

[4] *Leeds Times*, 16 July 1853.

[5] *Leeds Mercury*, 10 December 1853.

[6] *Leeds Intelligencer*, 30 September 1854, *Leeds Mercury*, 9 October 1855.

[7] *Leeds Mercury*, 9, 13 October 1855.

[8] A circular dated 29 October 1855, called upon the supporters of the "more advanced Liberal party" to a meeting on 5 November. *Leeds Mercury*, 1 November 1855.

[9] *Leeds Intelligencer*, 18 August 1855.

[10] Ibid, 1 December 1855.

[11] *Leeds Mercury*, 1 December 1855. *Leeds Times*, 1, 8 December 1855. After Baines had been re-elected the *Leeds Times* was less laudatory and accused him - when he had been elevated to Aberdeen's ministry - of "sticking abjectly to the system . . . (which) made us a second-rate Power in war, and may make us a third-rate Power during a peace". *Leeds Times*, 9 February 1856.

[12] *Leeds Mercury*, 7 February 1856. *Leeds Intelligencer*, 9 February 1856.

[13] *Leeds Mercury*, *Leeds Times*, 15 March 1856, 19 April 1856.

[14] *Leeds Intelligencer*, 5 April 1856. *Leeds Mercury*, 8 April 1856.

[15] *Leeds Intelligencer*, 9 October 1852.

[16] *Leeds Mercury*, 11 September 1852. The Burgess roll for 1853 increased to 17,916; for 1854 to 21,126. *Leeds Intelligencer*, 9 September 1854.

[17] *Leeds Mercury*, 6 November 1852.

[18] Leeds Intelligencer, 30 October, 6 November 1852. The result of the election left the numbers at: Liberals 56 and Conservatives 8. Fraser has summarized the political composition of Leeds council for the period 1835-80 in Urban Politics, p. 125.

[19] Leeds Times, 30 October 1852, Leeds Intelligencer, 6 November 1852, Leeds Mercury, 6 November 1852. The party labels used for the candidates varied. It is easy to identify a Conservative - he was labelled as such by the Leeds Intelligencer and, of course, was labelled "Tory" by the Leeds Mercury and the Leeds Times. The Leeds Times might label non-Conservative candidates as "Whig," "Liberal," "Radical" or "Chartist" on the list of nominations. The Leeds Mercury recognized candidates as Chartists but after the election they were included in the "Liberal" fold for the purpose of determining the relative strengths of the two main parties in the Council. The Leeds Mercury did not use the label "Whig". The Leeds Intelligencer referred to the opponents of the Conservative party as "Whigs" or "Chartists".

[20] Leeds Times, 13, 27 November 1852. Wortley was the wealthier part of the Holbeck ward. Alderman W.E. Hepper was probably the most influential member of the election committee for the Liberal candidates.

[21] Leeds Intelligencer, 13 August 1853.

[22] Ibid., 8 October 1853.

[23] Fraser has recorded only a gain of one seat for the Conservatives over 1852-53. Urban Politics, p. 125. Fraser's Conservative group numbered 8, 9, 13, 16 and 14 in 1852-53, 1853-54, 1854-55, 1855-56 and 1856-57. My calculations for those years (at the time of the annual election) are: 8, 10, 14, 17 and 16.

[24] Leeds Times, 5 November 1853.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid., Leeds Mercury, 5 November 1853.

[27] Leeds Mercury, 23 September 1854. Leeds Times, 30 September 1854. Voters in Poor Law elections were required to select the ward in which they wished to vote prior to the distribution.

[28] Leeds Intelligencer, 14 October 1854.

[29] Leeds Mercury, 14 October 1854.

[30] Leeds Intelligencer, 4 November 1854.

[31] Leeds Mercury, 4 November 1854.

[32] Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Times, 4 November 1854.

[33] *Leeds Times*, 21 October, 4 November 1854. It is difficult to determine the reason for the *Leeds Mercury*'s support of the radical element in the party rather than the Whig side. Lambert had voted against Russell's education bill when the Council considered it in June, 1853. Jackson was a partner in a printing and paper-making business and may have had a close friendship with Baines. On the other hand, Botterill was not in favour of strong measures to suppress the smoke nuisance - a cause dear to the *Leeds Mercury*'s heart. At a public meeting on the smoke nuisance, held in September 1855, Botterill complained about the articles that had appeared in the newspaper on the issue. He did not complain about the other two newspapers even though the Leeds press shared the same opinion on the need to rid the town of the smoke nuisance.

[34] *Leeds Mercury*, 4 November 1854. The Liberal candidate in the North East ward withdrew from the election contest when he learned of the unfavourable results of the revision. *Leeds Intelligencer*, *Leeds Mercury*, 21 October 1854.

[35] Ibid., 15 September 1855.

[36] *Leeds Mercury*, 29 September, 9 October 1855. *Leeds Times*, 6 October 1855.

[37] *Leeds Mercury*, 16 October 1855.

[38] On the day of the election John Bell, manager of the Leeds Permanent Building Society and an active member of Ardill's election committee, was manhandled by John Chiesman. The matter was taken to court and settled in March 1856. Bell was awarded £50 and costs. *Leeds Mercury*, 27 March 1856. *Leeds Times*, 29 March 1856.

[39] *Leeds Mercury*, *Leeds Times*, 1, 22 November 1855, *Leeds Intelligencer*, 24 November 1855.

[40] In a bye-election held in the Holbeck ward in July 1856, there was another contest between two Liberal candidates. The compact between the Wortley "Whigs" and the Holbeck group had held but the Wortley Liberals were unable to decide which of the two candidates nominated by their district should be supported!

[41] *Leeds Mercury*, 30 October 1856. *Leeds Times*, 1 November 1856.

[42] *Leeds Mercury*, 4 November 1856. Leonard Hicks had led the attack against Stead. Relationships between Stead and the minority of Conservative guardians were probably further soured by the court case which was heard on 10 October 1856. The plaintiffs, Messrs. Ferns and Rooke solicitors, were attempting to recover fees which they were owed for legal services connected with the North ward inquiry of 1852. Stead had been elected in the North ward but had prudently switched to the Kirkgate ward in the 1853 election. Hicks and Wray had been involved in the collection of money to pay the costs. Stead had not contributed to the fund to defray the legal expenses even though he had promised to do so. *Leeds Times*, 11 October 1856.

[43] Leeds Times, 4 October 1856. Leeds Mercury, 2 October 1856.

[44] Leeds Mercury, 1, 4 November 1856.

[45] Leeds Times, Leeds Mercury, 1 November 1856. Leeds Intelligencer, 8 November 1856.

[46] Leeds Times, 8 November 1856.

[47] Harrison claimed that R.M. Carter and John Williamson were the last Chartist candidates. J.F.C. Harrison, "Chartism in Leeds," in Chartist Studies, ed. A. Briggs, (London: Macmillan, 1959), pp. 91 and 97.

[48] Dr. Fraser, Urban Politics, p. 146. There were twelve wards for the purpose of election to town council. The wards in the township of Leeds mirrored those for parliamentary elections but the out-townships were "collapsed" to form larger wards for municipal elections. This may help to explain the ill-will between the Holbeck and Wortley groups since Wortley was a separate ward for the purpose of parliamentary elections.

Bramley was a municipal ward which included the townships of Beeston, Farnley and Armley - all distinct parliamentary wards. Finally, Headingley municipal ward included the townships of Potternewton and Chapel Allerton. The apparent lack of contests in Bramley and Headingley may be explained by the relatively large geographical area which each ward encompassed. It was probably preferable to reach an accommodation with the opposing party or avoid an election because the distances involved would, in the event of a contest, cost time and money.

[49] The Leeds Intelligencer, as is to be expected, complained the most about the dearth of councillors of sufficient stature. 30 October 1852, 8, 11, 22 September 1855. Even the Leeds Times seemed to suggest a lowering of the calibre of candidates when it denounced "empty-headed scurrility and contemptible squabbling" in the 1854 election and also made the same type of comments in succeeding years, 21 October 1854, 20 October 1855, 25 October 1857.

[50] Leeds Times, 2 April 1853.

[51] Leeds Intelligencer, 25 March 1854.

[52] John O'Rourke, who claimed to be an artist, was appointed to the position of Removal Officer by the Board of Guardians on 5 February 1857. Chiesman was an auctioneer and sheriff's officer.

[53] Leeds Times, 31 March 1855, Leeds Mercury, 9 June 1855.

[54] Leeds Intelligencer, 27 November 1855.

[55] Leeds Mercury, 8 December 1855.

[56] Leeds Times, Leeds Mercury, 9 October 1852.

[57] Leeds Times, 9 October 1852. Baines was re-appointed President of the Poor Law Board in January 1853!

[58] Leeds Intelligencer, 15 January 1853. The newspaper noted how the subsequent overturn of the Conservative candidates in the North ward had resulted in "braggartly posted orange placards" and that a brass band had been sent around the town to proclaim the Liberal party's victory. [12 February 1853.] Later in the month the columns of the two 'liberal' journals in Leeds appeared "to be open receptacles for all the abusive language, all the vials of Whig-Radical wrath" that could be poured forth upon the heads of the Conservatives. 26 February 1853.

[59] Leeds Times, 9 April 1853.

[60] Leeds Mercury, 14 May 1853.

[61] Ibid., 11 February 1854.

[62] Leeds Times, 15 April 1854.

[63] Leeds Mercury, 15 April 1854.

[64] Leeds Intelligencer, 22 July 1854.

[65] Leeds Times, 10 March 1855. Leeds Mercury, 10, 17, 24, 31 March 1855.

[66] Leeds Mercury, 14 April 1855.

[67] Leeds Mercury, 17, 19 April 1856.

[68] It was suggested that Stead had originally been elected in Kirkgate with Phillips because the latter, being a butcher, was able to draw on support from that group. The Leeds Mercury claimed that the butchers had previously prevented Stead's political ambitions. 29 April 1854.

[69] The number of candidates seeking election to the 18 seats on the Leeds Board of Guardians at each annual election was:

Year	No. of Nominations*	Uncontested Wards
1852	25	6
1853	35	0
1854	30	1
1855	23	5
1856	39	2
1857	32	2

* The number of serious nominations.

The wards for the township were: North, North East, North West, East, South, West, Mill Hill and Kirkgate. For an analysis of the period 1844-68 see also Fraser, Urban Politics, p. 58. Fraser lists the number of Conservatives and Liberals elected in each year.

[70] Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Mercury, 29 March 1856.

[71] Leeds Mercury, 9 April 1857. If a ratepayer qualified by ownership of property in more than one ward, or by occupancy in one ward and ownership in another, he or she had to select the ward in which the votes would be cast prior to the voting day. This requirement was unlike that in municipal elections where it was possible to decide in which ward one would vote on the day of the election by casting one's vote in whichever ward one was qualified. Parties fighting municipal contests undoubtedly carried on some careful advance planning to take advantage of the flexibility which some of their supporters had in terms of being qualified in more than one ward. November 1858, a decision in Court of Queen's Bench ruled that electors had to choose the ward in which they wished to vote at the revision court and not the polling booth. The other major difference between voting at the two types of election was that for Guardians' elections there was a sliding scale of votes based upon the rateable value of the property. A voter who occupied property with a rateable value in excess of £250 was entitled to six votes. If he also owned property of that value he would have a total of twelve votes. It is the ability of individuals to have multiple votes which makes an analysis of voter participation in any election impossible without access to the voting papers.

[72] Leeds Intelligencer, 4 April 1857.

[73] Leeds Mercury, 16 April 1857. Leeds Times, 18 April 1856. A letter to the editor suggested that the Mendicity Office (where Richard Moat was the Master) had supplanted the back parlour of the Black Swan for the purpose of planning coups de main. Leeds Times, 25 April 1857.

[74] Leeds Mercury, 18, 21 April 1857.

[75] The Leeds Intelligencer called for honest and fair elections and dissociated the Conservative Party from any proxy forgeries that might have occurred, 25 April 1857.

[76] Leeds Mercury, 21 April 1857.

[77] Eric Glasgow, "The Establishment of the Northern Star Newspaper," History 39 (1954): 62. J.F.C. Harrison, "Chartism In Leeds," pp. 86 and 91.

[78] Other signatories included David Green, the radical bookseller and printer, and James Hole, the radical social reformer, who worked for a firm of stuff merchants and also served as honorary secretary of the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics Institutes. For James Hole see J.F.C. Harrison, "Social Reform in Victorian Leeds: The Work of James Hole 1820-1895" Thoresby Society, 1854. As Harrison had pointed out, Hole was far from being a Chartist. At the organizational meeting he spoke at length against the ballot being adopted as a principle of the association.

[79] Leeds Times, 10 November 1855.

[80] The association was to support: 1. Manhood suffrage 2. Vote by ballot 3. Shortening the duration of parliaments 4. A more equitable adjustment of representation to population 5. The abolition of the property qualification for M.P.'s 6. Promotion by merit in the army, navy and civil service.

[81] Leeds Mercury, 29, November 1855. Leeds Times, 1 December 1855.

[82] Leeds Mercury, 4 December 1855.

[83] Leeds Times, 8 December 1855.

[84] T. Wemyss Reid, Life of the Right Honourable William Edward Forster. 3rd ed. vol. 1 (London: Chapman and Hall, 1888; reprint ed., Bath: Adams and Dart, 1970), p. 308.

[85] Ibid, p. 310. Wemyss Reid joined the Leeds Mercury as a reporter in 1866 and became the editor four years later. He left the newspaper in 1887.

[86] Leeds Mercury, 10, 14 February 1857. Goodman had resigned as an alderman in November 1856.

[87] Leeds Intelligencer, 14 February 1857.

[88] Leeds Times, 14 February 1857.

[89] Ibid., 28 February 1857. One week later the newspaper warned that if the voluntaryists threw Leeds into the hands of the Conservatives they would "incur a responsibility in the country from which wiser men would shrink". 7 March 1857.

[90] Carbutt, a dissenter, supported a large extension of the franchise and vote by ballot. He was hostile to the union of Church and State.

[91] Leeds Times, Leeds Mercury, 11 October 1856.

[92] Leeds Mercury, 10 March 1857.

[93] This is confirmed in the account of the meeting published by the Leeds Intelligencer, 14 March 1857. The Leeds Times published an editorial calling on non-electors to exercise their rights and speak out at meetings or at the hustings. 14 March 1857.

[94] Leeds Mercury, 12 March 1857. The Leeds Times, 14 March 1857 assessed the number in the crowd at 1,500.

[95] Leeds Times, Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Mercury, 14 March 1857. After its account of the meeting the Leeds Intelligencer inserted a three-line announcement that Robert Hall's election committee was meeting daily af the offices of the Leeds Conservative Association - an indication that everything was progressing smoothly in the Conservative camp!

[96] Leeds Times, 14 March 1857.

[97] Leeds Intelligencer, 14 March 1857.

[98] The Leeds Times, 21 March 1857, provided a much more vivid account of the meeting than the Leeds Mercury. It explained that Carbutt's son-in-law, Alderman Luccock, expressed, on behalf of the family, a strong displeasure that Carbutt's candidacy would be pursued in defiance of the opinion of the electors. Edward Baines was unusually quiet and seemed ill at ease and had expressed a determination to have nothing further to do with the election. The Leeds Times felt that it was a pity that Baines had not made that resolution one month earlier!

[99] Robert Adams and Thomas W. George were selected from among Carbutt's supporters and R.M. Carter and George Hyde were chosen from the ranks of Forster's supporters. A. Lupton was chosen as the umpire because he was a friend of M.T. Baines.

[100] Leeds Mercury, 21 March 1857.

[101] Leeds Times, 21, 28 March 1857.

[102] Leeds Mercury, 24 March 1857, Leeds Times, 28 March 1857.

[103] A college in Ireland which trained Roman Catholic priests.

[104] The Palmerston government had been defeated on a motion condemning the conduct of hostilities in China.

[105] It is somewhat ironic that Edward Baines, a convinced teetotaller, should spring to the defence of the Liberal candidates on this issue. In 1852, he had printed his "Testimony and Appeal on the Effects of Total Abstinence," Leeds Mercury, 13 November 1852. It marked fifteen years since he had begun the practice of total abstinence. At a meeting held 16 May 1853, to consider the closure of public houses on Sundays, Edward Baines had supported a postion to prohibit the sale of liquor on Sundays to all except lodgers and bona fide travellers. Leeds Times, 21 May 1853.

[106] Leeds Intelligencer, 4 June 1853.

[107] Ibid., 17 June 1853. Baines achieved national prominence by the stand he took on the issue of the opening of the Crystal Palace on Sundays.

[108] Leeds Times, 22 July 1854.

[109] Ibid., 29 July 1854.

[110] John Wilson, the mayor, presented the following information:

Year	No. of Innkeepers	No. of Complaints	No. of Beersellers	No. of Complaints
1851-52	367	23	307	27
1852-53	373	25	337	41

[111] Leeds Intelligencer, 19 November 1853, 21 January 1854, 4 March 1854.

[112] Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Times, 17 June 1854. The Leeds Times recorded that the meeting had been preceded by ten days of placarding, handbills, and inflammatory addresses on the walls. Prior to the meeting, which was held from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., bands had paraded the streets throughout the day. In effect the activities seem to have had the appearance of an election campaign.

[113] Leeds Mercury, 22 July 1854. Edward Baines signed the editorial on this occasion. Other places, which were to be opened on Sundays included the National Gallery, the Zoological Gardens and the British and Geological Museums.

[114] Leeds Times, 28 October 1854.

[115] Leeds Intelligencer, 20 January 1855. 220 people attended the meeting. John Botterill attended the meeting and the first annual meeting of the Leeds Beersellers Association on 4 October 1855 at which he gave vocal support to the "rights of the trade". Ibid., 6 October 1855.

[116] Leeds Mercury, 27 January 1855.

[117] Ibid., 10 November 1855.

[118] Baines spoke in support of stricter control at a meeting held on 19 November 1856 and in editorials published later. Leeds Mercury, 20, 22 November 1856. The movement to amend the Beer Act started in Leeds. In May 1857, W.E. Forster suggested that 200 of the 350 beerhouses in Leeds were brothels, Leeds Times, 16 May 1857.

[119] Leeds Times, 22 November 1856. Robert Baker, Inspector of Factories, was the person who was the prime mover in the proposal. Darnton Lupton and Robert Jowitt, together with Baines, were also named as providing counsel to Baker. For more on Robert Baker see F. Beckwith, "Robert Baker," University of Leeds Review, 7 (1960-61): 39-49.

[120] Leeds Mercury, 23 December 1856, Leeds Intelligencer, 27 December 1856.

[121] The Leeds Times published a letter on nomination day from a Liberal elector who claimed to be a subscriber to the Reform Registration Association and who complained that Baines obtained all the printing work from the Association. The letter was signed "An Easy-Going Master Printer". 28 March 1857.

[122] The Leeds Times estimated the crowd at 11:00 a.m. as 1,500. When the mill hands were released for lunch, the newspaper estimated, the crowd had increased to 5,000-6,000. The Leeds Intelligencer calculated that between 500-1,000 were present at the start and claimed that by the end of the three-hour meeting some 15,000 had assembled. The Leeds Mercury suggested that 3,000 were present at the start of proceedings and agreed that 15,000 were present at the show of hands. Leeds Times, Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Mercury, 28 March 1857.

[123] One must read the report of Hall's nomination speech in the Leeds Intelligencer and Leeds Times. The Leeds Mercury condensed Hall's speech into a few lines and did not report his attack upon the proprietors!

[124] The Poll Book, Leeds Borough Election 8 July 1852. The Leeds Intelligencer, 11 April 1857.

[125] Leeds Times, 28 March 1857.

[126] Leeds Mercury, 31 March 1857. Baines' assertion about the Radicals and Chartists is easy to check. The 1857 poll book reveals that of eleven who signed the circular to establish the advanced Liberal party, five voted for Baines and Mills, two plumped for Mills and one plumped for Baines. Three advanced Liberals (27.0% of the group) did not vote. In this small sample the non-participation rate was somewhat higher than that for the borough as a whole. 4,361 (82.1%) voters of a total electorate of 5,311 registered voters exercised their franchise at the election. The proportion of the radical group which cast both votes for the Liberal candidates (45.0%) matched the 1,930 voters (44.3%) overall who gave both votes to the Liberals. Furthermore, none of the eleven split their votes between a Liberal candidate and Hall or plumped for Hall. Edward Baines must have based his information on a group of radicals other than the leaders! If the radical group is expanded to include those who had served as highway surveyors the results in a sample of 22 are: Baines and Mills 59.0%; Mills 27.3%; Hall 4.5% and non-voters 9.0%. None of those who signed the circular are included in the sample of Highway Surveyors.

[127] Leeds Times, 4 April 1857.

[128] Ibid., 31 March 1857.

[129] Leeds Intelligencer, 30 May 1857. Hall had caught a cold while sitting in a draughty location in the House of Commons. His constitution had probably been permanently impaired as a result of serious injuries which he sustained in a railway accident in Leeds in January 1855.

[130] Leeds Mercury, 28 May 1857, Leeds Times, 30 May 1857.

[131] Leeds Mercury, 30 May 1857.

[132] A notable exception to the constancy of support was J.D. Luccock. He had proposed Mills at the meeting of Liberal electors prior to the general election and supported Forster in the bye-election. His support for Mills may have been necessary on the basis that Mills succeeded his father-in-law, Francis Carbutt, as a candidate.

[133] Leeds Mercury, 2 June 1857, Leeds Times, 6 June 1857.

[134] Hall had spoken at a meeting of 1,300 of his supporters on 2 April 1857. Leeds Intelligencer, 4 April 1857.

[135] Beecroft, Butler and Co. (Kirkstall Forge.)

[136] Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Mercury, 4 June 1857.

[137] Leeds Mercury, 2, 4 June 1857.

[138] Ibid., 6 June 1857, Leeds Times, 6 June 1857, Leeds Intelligencer, 4 June 1857.

[139] Leeds Mercury, 6 June 1857.

[140] Leeds Times, 6 June 1857. The newspaper claimed that the Liberal electors had a majority of between 700 and 800 on the register.

[141] Leeds Mercury, 9 June 1857, Leeds Intelligencer, 13 June 1857, Leeds Times, 13 June 1857.

[142] Leeds Times, 20 June 1857.

[143] Ibid., 4 July 1857.

[144] Leeds Mercury, 4 July 1857.

[145] Ibid., 11 July 1857, Leeds Times, 11 July 1857.

[146] Leeds Mercury, 13 January 1855.

[147] The weather increased the hardship during February causing unemployment in the building trades. For the week ending 10 March 1855, 20,000 quarts of soup and 6,000 loaves of bread were distributed. Leeds Intelligencer, 10 March 1855. The weekly expenditure of the Soup Committee rose to £250. Leeds Times, 17 March 1855.

[148] Leeds Mercury, 10 March 1855.

[149] Leeds Times, 7 April 1855. By July it was reported that pauperism in Leeds township had deceased markedly in the previous few months. Leeds Intelligencer, 14 July 1855.

[150] Ibid., 1 September 1855.

[151] Leeds Intelligencer, 27 November 1855.

[152] J.R. Lowerson suggests that many of the Leeds radicals opposed Baines because he had been too quiet on the issue of parliamentary reform while they supported John Bright. This aspect of disagreement does not appear to be a dominant factor. 'Dictatorship' and 'voluntaryism' seem to have been far more important as irritants. Lowerson also suggests that Forster withdrew as a candidate in the 1857 bye-election because "he felt he could not act freely in the same town as Baines". It is clear, however, that Forster withdrew because he had agreed to withdraw if outvoted at the meeting of the Liberal electors. J.R. Lowerson, "The Political Career of Sir Edward Baines 1800-90" (Unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Leeds, 1965), pp. 182-184.

CHAPTER 4

1857 - 59: EQUIPOISE

Pray Mr. Baines, how can you flatter,
And with such praise your friend bespatter?
Him whom so short a time ago
You treated as a deadly foe.
Leeds Intelligencer, 30 April 1859

I

After the treatment which he had received at the hands of Edward Baines it is not surprising to discover that W.E. Forster was a member of the syndicate which established the Leeds Express.[1] The first issue of the newspaper was published on 26 December 1857 and its editor, Lloyd Jones, declared in his opening leader that the teachings of the journalist should be "broad and liberal, not narrow and sectarian". He condemned journals which sustained themselves by "adopting and advocating local prejudices in a spirit of sectarian narrowness".[2] It is clear, therefore, that the newspaper was founded to counter the Leeds Mercury and, in its second issue, it confirmed that national rather than sectarian education would be supported.[3]

While Forster's involvement with the Leeds Express did not last long, Robert Meek Carter became involved as a partner in the proprietorship.[4] Although the political stance of the newspaper was similar, in many respects, to that of the Leeds Times, it was the Express which kept up the more sustained campaign, during January 1858, to pressure the Leeds Liberal establishment to support the reactivated movement for parliamentary reform.

The Leeds Express noted that the Leeds Reform Registration Society had reconstituted itself at a meeting held on 14 January 1858, and that its chairman, J.D. Luccock, had asserted that he would not belong to the Society unless it intended to do more than merely ensure the registration of voters. Chastising the Society for its failure to call a public meeting on the reform issue, the newspaper warned that the reunification of the Liberal party would not be achieved by such conduct, and that the last two elections in Leeds had shown that the electors could not "be safely used for party purposes".[5] By the end of the month it had become clear that Leeds, unlike other towns in the Riding, would not have a reform meeting because the Registration Association refused to act until Palmerston defined his intentions on reform. The Leeds Express hoped that the gentlemen of the town were not becoming too respectable "to attend to the duties of citizenship" that were demanded in times of political change.[6]

It appears that the first campaign of the fledgling newspaper against the Liberal establishment was repelled successfully. Nevertheless, the Leeds parliamentary election of 1859 witnessed the unlikely combination of Edward Baines and W.E. Forster as the Liberal candidates with the Leeds Express declaring, after Forster's defeat at the poll, its belief that Baines had done all that he could to secure the return of Forster.[7] While Edward Baines "deeply grieved" that Forster had not been returned as a member of Parliament, the Leeds Mercury saw no occasion for discouragement "on the whole". Leeds had gained, in its Conservative member, a partial consent to reform and the union of the Leeds Reform party had been secured![8] Edward Baines might have lived up to his commitment to support his fellow candidate but there is an eerie ambivalence to the pronouncements of Baines the candidate and Baines the newspaper editor. One suspects that he was more comfortable with his Conservative opponent as the other member for Leeds. As for reunion of the Reform party, the end result was no different from that in the elections of 1857, when it was disunited!

II

Two major party political issues arose in connection with the Board of Guardians between the parliamentary bye-election in 1857 and the general election nearly two years later. The first item resulted from the proxy forgeries which had been exposed in the Guardians' election of 1857. The second casus belli concerned the method which was used to select an architect for the new workhouse.

Prior to the opening of the Poor Law Board's inquiry into the 1857 elections, the Leeds Mercury suggested that the honour of Leeds Conservatism could only be restored if the Conservatives, as a party, exposed the misdeeds of "those men who would dishonour any party by belonging to it". The inquiry had, noted the newspaper, been ordered on the requisition of many of the most respectable inhabitants of the town and they were drawn from the membership of both political parties.[9] While the names of the Conservative supporters of the requisition are not available from the press reports, the names of the leaders of the movement to ask for an inquiry were published and those individuals were, of course, members of the Liberal party hierarchy.[10]

The inquiry lasted five days; a period beyond which, it appears, it could not extend if the solicitors involved in the proceedings were to attend to their duties at the municipal revision! Evidence produced during the inquiry established that George Beckwith, John O'Rourke, and George Cromack were most involved in the forgeries of owners' signatures on the proxy papers. Beckwith worked as a clerk in the *Leeds Intelligencer* office and he was also the registrar of births, marriages, and deaths, an appointment which he owed to the Board of Guardians. O'Rourke, as noted in a previous chapter, claimed to be an artist and was the removal officer of Scotch and Irish paupers from the township. Unlike his two accomplices, Cromack was not appointed to any official post by the Board of Guardians - he was a sheriff's bailiff - but he appears to have been responsible for the management of the proxy appointments; a position which had been held by Richard Moat in the period 1853-55. In addition, Cromack had been implicated in the wrongdoing revealed in the inquiry into the Guardians' elections of 1852.

At the end of the inquiry, Poor Law Inspector Manwaring had indicated that an early report would be made to the Poor Law Board. However, it was not until 18 February 1858 that warrants for the arrest of the three malefactors were sought from the Leeds magistrates. The *Leeds Times* pointed out that almost one year had elapsed since the "Tory agents and runners" had been exposed and that several months had passed since the inquiry but the newspaper explained the reason for the delay in the prosecution as being "occasioned by various circumstances into the particulars of which it is not necessary to enter".[11] Obviously from the point of view of the Liberal party it was preferable to have the case before the courts during a period in which the Guardians' elections were being held.

After a five-day examination by the borough magistrates, which ended on 25 February, the accused were committed for trial at the York assizes. The two-day trial resulted in sentences of one month's imprisonment for Beckwith and O'Rourke and fourteen days' imprisonment for Cromack whom the jury judged to have acted in the capacity of a clerk. The sentences were pronounced on 18 March and therefore the guilt was established and the maximum benefit was gained for the Liberals in time for the Guardians' elections which were held from 5 April.

At the regular weekly meeting of the Guardians on 16 September 1857, David Newton had reintroduced the issue of whether a new workhouse should be built, and although his motion did not receive enough support for its discussion at that meeting, it was discussed at a special meeting of the Board on 8 October. Newton was successful and the majority of nine who voted in favour of a new building included three Liberal Guardians as did the minority of five. The site of the new workhouse was confirmed by the Board on 18 November and probably because it was the most logical location - adjoining the industrial school - no opposition was shown, even though the Conservative solicitor Bertie Markland and Abraham Holroyd, another consistent Conservative voter, owned the two parcels of land which formed the proposed site.

The initial objection to building the new workhouse was made at a West ward Liberal meeting on 17 December. Concern was expressed about the "extraordinary and enormous expenditure" into which all the public bodies of the town appeared to be hurrying in the face of "the storm which is now raging over the commercial horizon", and delay in building the new workhouse was advocated.[12] It was inferred that the workhouse, like the town hall, would actually cost twice as much as its original estimate.[13] Liberal Guardian Henry Bailey Legg pointed out that the meeting had been convened too late and that in the final analysis the new workhouse would lead to a reduction in rates. He informed the meeting that the Guardians had avoided the possibility of jobbery because it had been decided to hold an architectural competition which offered "premiums" for the three best designs. In that manner the Guardians would ensure that a combination of the best design and the lowest price would provide the best workhouse possible.

Legg was proved to be too sanguine since it was the administration of the competition and resultant selection of the prize-winning entries which cause a split between the Liberals and Conservatives along party lines. The twenty-three entries were opened on 23 January 1858 and the Board, which met in Committee five days later, selected four of the plans for consideration as possible prize-winners. On 3 February the two parties argued over the procedures being used in the selection of the prize-winners and whether or not the advice of an architect should be sought after the selection had been made. The Leeds Mercury suggested that the reason for the "indecent haste" in selecting the design, and the reluctance to spend additional time on seeking professional advice on the feasibility of the plans, was due to the approaching elections. Some of the members on the current Board would not be members of it the following year due to the revelations at the inquiry into the elections of the previous year. If the Tory majority's friends were to be served, or new friends were to be acquired, then action would have to be taken prior to the upcoming electoral contest.[14]

Edward Baines played a prominent part in a meeting of ratepayers which was held on 9 February. While he declared himself to be before the meeting as a person who was disinterested in the previous proceedings relative to the workhouse plan, he took pains to provide details of what he considered to be the shortcomings in the procedures which had been used. Baines claimed that it was important for the reputation of the town that the architects who had entered the competition should feel that their plans had been given a full and a fair consideration. His motion, which advocated that ratepayers should be able to express their opinions on the selection of a plan, was adopted. Lloyd Jones proposed a motion which condemned the "undue haste" of the Guardians but he thought that the question would be addressed "without any regard at all to the politics of the parties engaged in the discussion"! William Middleton, the chairman of the Board of Guardians, attended the meeting and was invited to address the audience but his explanation of the management of the competition was subjected to constant interruption.[15]

Edward Baines and Lloyd Jones, as movers of two of the resolutions at the ratepayers' meeting, were members of the deputation which presented the resolutions to the Board of Guardians the next day. Alderman Botterill, chairman of the ratepayers' meeting, claimed that the crowd on the previous evening had been one of the largest ever assembled in the Leeds Court House. After the deputation had withdrawn the Conservative majority on the Board awarded the first prize in the architectural competition to the Leeds firm of Perkins and Backhouse - a prediction which had been published in the Leeds Mercury six days before![16] The pollbooks for the elections held from 1852 to 1865, confirm both partners as consistent Conservative supporters in parliamentary elections.

At its meeting of 10 March 1858, the Guardians learnt that the Poor Law Board had approved the plans prepared by Perkins and Backhouse and William Middleton took the opportunity to defend the actions of the Conservative Guardians and to label the ratepayers' meeting as "purely . . . political . . . one-sided, and got up for a political purpose . . . to serve a political end".[17] Middleton laid the foundation stone of the new workhouse on 5 April at a ceremony which, claimed the Leeds Times, had "a party and political significance quite inexcusable in a Board of public men".[18]

The combined assault on the Conservative Guardians that resulted from the proxy voting scandal and the issue of the new workhouse, might be expected to have swept them from the Board in the same way that they had been forced out after the election scandal of 1852. The Liberals expected a victory and perhaps the magnanimous verdict of the Leeds Mercury, in an editorial about the outcome of the competition for the design of the workhouse, was an indication of that self-confidence. Noting that most people who had seen the plans approved the selection of the Perkins and Backhouse as first prize-winners the newspaper went on:

> We congratulate the ratepayers upon the fact, that although the Guardians adopted what we have always considered . . . a most unjustifiable course . . . the actual result is all that could reasonably desired.[19]

The Guardians' election resulted in the return of ten Conservatives and eight Liberals and thus, in spite of the vigour with which the Liberals had pursued the Conservative party workers through a Poor

Law Board Inquiry and two courts, and despite the indignation which was generated over the method of selecting the plans for the new workhouse, the Liberals were not even able to secure a majority on the Board. Rather than concentrating on organization at the ward level, the Liberal party had let the legal system and motions at a ratepayers' meeting take its place. An indication of the state of party organization is evident from the report of a nomination meeting in the West ward on 16 March. Not only was it the first which had been called in that ward for several years but also it attracted fewer people than had been expected.[20] Chastising the Liberal party for conducting themselves with "culpable indifference", the Leeds Times noted that while the "great battle of reform" used to be carried out in the Registration courts, it appeared that the payment of rates would have to be the standard around which the friends of reform would have to rally. The newspaper confessed that the great bulk of the community had been "virtually disfranchised in consequence of its neglect of this parochial '*sine qua non*'".[21] It was suggested that the Liberal Reform Association should model their organization on the Conservative party by having a "central body of union . . . to which all appeals should be addressed, and by which a definite course of action should be taken". Tories would necessarily "carry the sway" until that was done because of the completeness of their organization.[22]

The Liberals were humiliated by their failures in the 1858 elections and it is clear that they took their defeat seriously for, in 1859, the new Board had a Liberal majority and the Leeds Intelligencer recorded that the Liberals had been organized months before the election. "Misrepresentation, political partizanship . . . other violent efforts . . . (and) no small amount of money" had, explained the Conservative journal, enabled the Liberals to effect their success.[23] The newspaper report was carried on the day of the poll for the parliamentary election of 1859, and there can be little doubt that the shock of the results of the Guardians' election of the previous year had provided a stimulus to their organization which benefited the Liberals in both poor law and parliamentary elections in 1859.

It is suggested that Edward Baines' majority of forty-one votes over G.S. Beecroft in the parliamentary election may have owed something to Liberal party activity that was generated initially as the result of a loss at a local election.

III

In 1854, an unusually large group of seven Conservatives had been elected to seats on town council and 1857 marked the end of their term of office. Only two Conservatives were returned in 1857 and one of them was elected in the perennially safe seat of Headingley. The _Leeds Times_ opined that William Middleton, pawnbroker and Conservative chairman of the Board of Guardians who was elected in the North East ward, would "conscientiously discharge his responsibilities to the town".[24] On the other hand, the newspaper found little comfort in the Liberal victories and concluded

> The ratepayers are getting sickened and disgusted alike with the empty frothiness and stupid indifference of the Corporation as at presently constituted.[25]

Both the _Leeds Times_ and the _Leeds Intelligencer_ had supported John Harding, one of the three Liberal candidates in the West ward where, once again, the "party of all shades" was unable to remain united.[26]

The lack of Conservative success was attributed, by the organ of that party, to a deficiency in organization and the Intelligencer recorded that, with one or two exceptions, there had been an absence of excitement at the elections.[27] Signs of intra-party difficulties had been evident as early as 27 July, when it was reported that the municipal bye-election in Kirkgate, held due to the death of Conservative councillor Richard Stead, revealed "unfortunate differences" among the Conservatives in the ward. Edmund Stead, currier and leather merchant, was returned for the Liberals.[28]

The Leeds Mercury suggested that the Conservative defeats were due to the disgust of the respectable portion of the party with the forgeries committed at the election of Guardians.[29] It seems reasonable to attribute partially the Conservative reverses to low morale but the municipal revision had also gone in favour of the Liberals. Possibly David Richardson, the Conservative registration agent, was not as capable as his predecessor because he was joined in his activities the following year by W.J. Gregory who, it appears, had been appointed as Secretary of the Conservative Association. Yet in spite of the additional help the result of the 1858 revision was an increase in the number of gains made by the Liberals the previous year.[30] The elections in 1858 resulted in a net loss of two seats for the Conservatives and they returned only five candidates.

Mill Hill ward provided the contest which was really the focal point of the 1858 municipal election. Apparently, the full weight of the Conservative Association was employed in support of William

St. James Wheelhouse, a barrister, and Henry Dufton a woollen merchant. Wheelhouse had been on the hustings on nomination day at the 1852 parliamentary election, and he had acted as the spokesman for the absent Robert Hall. The Leeds Mercury had pointed out that he was a non-elector and he was labelled, together with the other Conservatives on the hustings, as belonging to the "rump" of the party.[31] In 1857, Wheelhouse had been on the hustings with Hall and at the bye-election that year he had served as the vice-chairman of Beecroft's election committee. In February 1858, he had defended Beckwith at the prosecution of the proxy forgers before the borough magistrates and in the following month he assisted with the defence of the three proxy forgers at the Yorkshire Spring Assizes. Wheelhouse obviously had a record of party service and it might be expected that he would be supported at the municipal elections in November 1858.

Initially the Conservative election committee for Mill Hill tried to reach a compromise with the Liberals so that one member from each party would be returned. The Liberals, however, rejected the offer and the Conservative candidates took the unusual step - in municipal politics - of issuing addresses to the electors. Wheelhouse asserted that he was a candidate because it was his duty as a citizen; that the municipal government was not in the hands of those best qualified to discharge the trust; that politics had excluded those who differed with the majority on council from the higher offices of the corporation; and that in purely municipal concerns political feelings and opinions should have no weight whatever![32] "That we should be divided into Liberals and Conservatives is a law of our nature", responded the Leeds Mercury, and the newspaper pointed out that the men who were most active at Parliamentary elections were, generally speaking, the most active in municipal affairs.[33]

According to the Conservative newspaper, Wheelhouse and Dufton were unsuccessful because many of the Conservative voters were unavoidably absent on election day and others, some of whom had taken part in the nomination of the candidates, abstained from voting. However, the Leeds Times reported that even after it was clear that Dufton had no chance of being elected the Conservatives "laboured excessively" to place Wheelhouse at the head of the poll.[34] It seems apparent that Wheelhouse lacked support from Conservative voters even though he had the party organization committed to his campaign. E.P. Hennock has suggested that Wheelhouse was outside the inner circle of Leeds Conservatives even when he ran as a candidate in the parliamentary election of 1868, and the difficulties which were encountered in the Mill Hill municipal election ten years earlier tends to support that conclusion. Wheelhouse's participation in the defence of the proxy forgers may have played a part in his estrangement from the Conservative hierarchy.[35] Although he had served as vice-chairman of Beecroft's election committee in 1857, Wheelhouse did not occupy that position in 1859, but he was the Conservative chairman of the Mill Hill ward and he seems to have been effective. Liberal candidates had gained more votes than their opponents in Mill Hill in the general elections of 1852 and 1857 and while the ward's voters had given strong support to Beecroft in the 1857 bye-election it could not be considered a "safe" ward for the Conservatives. In 1859, Mill Hill voters returned Beecroft at the head of the list of candidates. He polled twenty-six votes ahead of Baines, his nearest rival, and fifty votes more than Forster.[36] Mill Hill was, therefore, a significant victory - especially when viewed in the light of Beecroft's twenty-two vote margin win over Forster in the election. Wheelhouse may have been estranged from some of the Mill Hill Conservatives in municipal level politics but his own loyalty to the party was evident by his work on its behalf in the parliamentary election which was held five months later. While Conservatives had been reluctant to vote for him as a municipal candidate they seemed willing to rally behind him in the parliamentary contest when his own candidacy was not an issue.

IV

There was a good attendance at the annual meeting for the election of highway surveyors for the year 1858-59, and some dissatisfaction was expressed about the state of repair of the highways. An attempt was made to elect a group of surveyors other than those who had been proposed by David Newton but his "list" was accepted when the leaders of the opposition withdrew their demand for a poll.

The 1859 meeting, which also attracted a large crowd, was reported as being noisy and boisterous. William Smith, who had moved the amended list in 1858, repeated the tactic one year later recalling that the Board had been composed entirely of working men at one time.[37] Smith, who had earned the opportunity to make a speech by virtue of his demand for a poll, withdrew his list immediately after speaking, an indication that he wanted a platform for his views rather than serious consideration for his nominees. During the meeting a complaint was made from the audience that too much had been spent on the principal streets of the town in preparation for the visit of "an eminent lady" to the detriment of streets in areas occupied by the working man. The disrespect shown to the Queen and the suggestion of "aristocratic pandering" raised a storm of indignation.[38] Repair of the streets was easily sacrificed to accommodate the preparations deemed necessary for a royal visit.

From the evidence provided by the newspaper reports of the annual meetings, it would appear that control of the Board was no longer a major issue at this period. Political activity connected with the annual elections seems to have been carried out in isolation from other local politics and certainly had no impact on the parliamentary election. It is likely that those who were inclined towards political action were focussing their attention on the movement for parliamentary reform.

In an editorial in November 1857, the Leeds Mercury noted that Lord Palmerston had induced the advanced Liberals to abstain from introducing the matter of parliamentary reform during that year, on the understanding that the Government would present a proposal for a comprehensive reform measure in the following year. According to the Mercury further reform in the representation of the people was "imperatively demanded by the people themselves".[39] Eleven months later, by which time Lord Derby's Conservative government had succeeded that of Palmerston, Edward Baines had to allow that the question of a further reform in parliamentary representation had "excited much less apparent interest in the public mind than the agitation which resulted in the Reform Act of 1832".[40]

Yet, before the end of October 1858, John Bright had brought the reform issue to prominence by his address to his Birmingham constituents. The Leeds Mercury, however, accused Bright of "falling behind his age" by his desire for the "abstract perfection" of universal suffrage and equal electoral districts. Baines predicted that he would find it hard to raise those "dead theories" into anything like real life and regretted that the "champion of progress . . . (was) toiling away at those exhausted diggings".[41] By mid-November the Mercury warned the Reformers that the issue exposed them to as much danger as the Government. Demands of an extreme kind would play into the hands of the opponents of reform and if the Conservatives were to dissolve Parliament "the ranks of the Reformers would be thrown into the utmost confusion". Furthermore, a Liberal government would not accept office with the prospect of having to confront a Reform Bill which they could not adopt but which had the support of a considerable section of their party. Baines urged reformers to petition for reform on the basis of principles rather than details and thereby avoid the danger of division in their ranks.[42]

The radical Leeds Express, on the other hand gave vigorous support to a policy of action "with definite and intelligible aims" and warned that a movement in favour of reform which only gave a vague statement of principles "would begin in confusion and end in chaos".[43]

A meeting of the Leeds Reform Registration Association was held on 19 November at which a subcommittee recommended, in very general terms, support for parliamentary reform.[44] The subcommittee's report was adopted unanimously and it was decided to requisition for a town meeting. Robert Meek Carter was a member of the deputation which called on the mayor, on Friday 10 December, to present the requisition and he argued, albeit without success, that the meeting should be called for seven o'clock in the evening, rather than midday, so that the working classes could attend. The moderate reformers seemed to prove themselves able to control not only the time of the meeting but also the tone of the meeting. It was noted in the Leeds Times that 'stars' from a distance would not be asked to give their countenance and support to the borough reform movement.[45]

Edward Baines received some probably superfluous advice from his elder brother about the best structure for the meeting. While the Leeds Liberal M.P. recommended that a resolution should be passed in favour of a "substantial and large extension of the suffrage, without specifying any particular extension" he confided that he thought a £10 franchise in the English counties and the £5 to £6 rating franchise for English boroughs "would be safe and practicable and will be a very liberal measure". No consideration would induce M.T. Baines to vote for household or manhood suffrage "which would qualify any man whose name appears upon the rate books for a cellar, a pig stye, or a dog-kennel".[46]

At noon on Wednesday 22 December, the Reformers assembled for their meeting. The mayor had just called upon Edward Baines to move the first resolution when John Shaw, whom the Leeds Mercury labelled "an active Chartist", proposed adjournment until the evening. J.D. Luccock seconded the motion but both Shaw and he agreed to Robert Meek Carter's amendment which adjourned the meeting until seven o'clock the next evening. In its introduction to the Wednesday meeting the Mercury suggested that it had been called for noon because the mayor, Sir Peter Fairbairn, could not attend on that or any other evening, before 5 January 1859. The Leeds Times did not suggest that the time had been set in order to accommodate the mayor, but rather that if the meeting had been called for seven o'clock in the evening "the leading members of the reform party would not then . . . (have been) able to assist in the demonstration".[47] Obviously the leaders of the Reform Registration Association preferred to avoid calling a meeting at which there would be a possibility of more than bland resolutions being adopted. Nevertheless, Edward Baines spoke at length at the town hall meeting on Thursday evening and the audience of approximately two-thousand appears to have been mainly working class.

At both the beginning and end of his speech Baines reminded the audience that he had been at his father's side forty-two years before at the first great reform meeting in Leeds and, he confessed, "he thought that he had an hereditary claim upon them"![48] While the statement is an indication of the deference which Baines expected, the fact that he mentioned the "claim" suggests an apprehension that the allegiance of Leeds electorate was by no means assured! Councillor Carter urged unity between the moderate reformers and those who wished to have manhood suffrage. He moved a resolution which called for a "large extension" of the franchise with the protection of the vote by ballot. Councillor Newton, however, declared his dissatisfaction with a resolution which was so indefinite and he moved an addendum which specified a borough franchise for all males "of full age" who occupied, as owner or tenant, any premises rated to the relief of the poor.[49] The seconder to the addendum claimed that the working classes had enabled the middle classes to become enfranchised in 1832 and that it was the turn of the middle classes to help to enfranchise the working classes. Carter cautioned the working classes against introducing division into the Liberal party but the addendum was carried with the support of approximately sixty percent of the audience. Although an attempt was made to put the resolution to the audience in its original form the chairman was unable to make himself heard. At that point in the proceedings the promoters of the meeting withdrew and a petition to the House of Commons was moved by Newton and seconded by his flexible colleague Councillor Carter.

Edward Baines vented his displeasure at the outcome of the meeting in an editorial declaring that the addendum had been carried entirely by the vote of the working classes and regretting that the decision deprived him

> of the pride and pleasure of boasting that even those who could scarcely hope at present to receive the franchise saw the wisdom of acting with the true friends of Reform among the middle classes.50

Baines noted that persons "cannot" (sic!) subscribe to the expenses of petitions which they do not approve. The editor of the Leeds Mercury made subservience to his political opinion the paramount criterion for financial support and there was no point in misplaced "charity" - even at Christmas - in political disputes. The Leeds Express confirmed Baines' prophesy on 1 January 1859, when it reported that the Leeds Reform Registration Association had, indeed, refused to pay the expenses associated with the petition. Thereupon, Councillor Carter decided to pay all the necessary expenses himself.[51]

One week later Edward Baines defined his position on the franchise by accepting as his target a doubling of the number of borough electors.[52] Nevertheless, he continued to wage a campaign against Bright's "London programme" of household suffrage and he suggested that the practical object of every "good and true" Reformer was "the enfranchisement of the respectable, educated and steady portion of the working classes . . . (but) not the rest".[53] In response to Bright's Bradford speech of 17 January the Leeds Mercury avowed "we dare not commit the liberties and interests of England to the indiscriminate masses of the working population".[54] The other Liberal journals in Leeds supported Bright.[55]

Although the moderates in the Leeds Reform Registration Association had managed to keep 'stars' from the borough reform meeting, it could not prevent Leeds being represented at the first meeting of the Provisional Committee of the West Riding Reform Association in Bradford on 24 January. W.E. Forster presided at an inconclusive initial meeting.[56] Eight days later the editors of the Leeds Mercury were gratified to find themselves in agreement with Bright on the issue of the extension of the franchise. In his speech at Rochdale on 28 January, he had accepted that the idle, the profligate or the intemperate should not have the franchise.[57] Bright had abandoned his original position on the necessity for manhood suffrage. In October 1859, he wrote to Baines indicating his adherence to the L6 rental as the basis for the borough franchise and noting that he was "anxious to get the best measure we can as soon as we can".[58]

In addition to the indecisiveness of the Provisional Committee and the resolution of the differences with Bright on the franchise, Baines was also able to benefit from the introduction of the Derby Reform Bill on 28 February. Once again, it would be easier to unite the "party of all shades" with a Conservative bill before Parliament and Baines was quick to condemn it as "decided humbug".[59]

On 19 February 1859, M.T. Baines wrote to Edward informing him of his decision to retire from Parliament and advised

> If my decision were to be made known now, I believe that the announcement would do no good, but would impose upon us all - perhaps upon you especially - a good deal of difficulty and trouble prematurely.[60]

While it is not possible to determine when Edward Baines decided to seek the nomination as a Liberal candidate one must consider his actions and pronouncements from mid-February 1859, in the light of his brother's letter. At any event, the meeting of the Provisional Committee which was held in Bradford on 3 March does not seem to have had representatives from Leeds in attendance and, presumably not by coincidence, the committee of the Leeds Reform Registration Association met on the same day. Whether Baines influenced the arrangements for the Leeds meeting is unknown but Councillor Carter, who had been a Leeds delegate to the initial Provisional Committee meeting in Bradford, was mentioned by the Leeds Mercury, in its account of the Leeds meeting, as the person who would propose a petition from town council against the Reform Bill.[61]

It could not have pleased Edward Baines that two days after the Leeds Reform Registration Association's committee meeting the Leeds Express denounced the organization as being feeble and urged steps to free the liberal constituency from the control of the "same men . . . acting under the influence of the same petty motives, bound by the same stupid compacts" as had forfeited one of the seats to the Conservatives in the elections of 1857.[62] At a meeting of the Association on 8 March, Baines led the group which wanted to adopt a cautious policy with respect to statements about specific reform proposals and he proposed that a petition should be forwarded to Parliament without a public meeting being called. After the vote went against him he left with his supporters! The members of the Association who remained discussed the representation of the borough in Parliament and it was resolved to invite W.E. Forster and A.H. Layard, a Radical of national repute, to stand as candidates.

Without doubt the discussion of candidates was reported to Baines for the next day his name headed the list of those who signed a circular asking the recipients to attend a meeting on 10 March. It was arranged for those "who for the sake of union among Reformers wish not to propose any specific plan of Reform at the present moment". A suggestion was made that the group would withdraw from the public meeting if any resolution were made of which it disapproved. It was vetoed by Baines and a discussion of the representation of the town ensued.[63]

Baines' loyalists chaired ward meetings in Holbeck and Bramley which were held on the 11 and 15 March respectively. Alderman Kitson tried, in vain, to prevent a resolution in support of household suffrage being brought before the Holbeck meeting and it was carried by a large majority. Alderman Richard Wilson, who presided at the Bramley meeting, tried to focus the attention of the audience on opposition to the Conservative Reform Bill but a resolution in support of a rate-paying franchise was passed.[64] In the East ward an extension of the borough franchise to a £5 rental was approved on 14 March and at a meeting held in the North West ward the next day Councillor Newton spoke in favour of the resolution which recommended manhood suffrage. On 17 March, at an Armley ward meeting, a motion was passed which supported an extension of the franchise to occupants of houses who had been rated to the relief of the poor for six months. Once again a Baines supporter, Councillor Yewdall, had been unable to confine the attention of the meeting to opposition to the Government Reform Bill.[65]

Interest in the borough reform meeting, which was held on 18 March, had been stimulated by the knowledge that a division in the Liberal party existed. Those who wished to confine the meeting to an expression of opinion on the Government Bill, were opposed by the advanced Liberals who wanted a resolution which emphasized that support would be withheld from any reform bill which did not provide for a "very large" extension of the franchise. The Leeds Times records that all differences of opinion were "harmoniously arranged" at the last moment.[66]

Although he was interrupted on many occasions, the meeting must be regarded as a triumph for Edward Baines. His motion was an attack on the Conservative Reform Bill rather than a specific reform proposal but notwithstanding its destructive rather than constructive nature, it was adopted by the audience. Discussion on the extension of the franchise was avoided and Baines' resolution merely included an objection to the Bill because the franchise was not extended "to the skilled, thriving and orderly artizans of our boroughs". Elijah Rawlinson, a tailor, seconded the resolution, David Green, the radical bookseller proposed a vote of thanks to the mayor and John Shaw, the Chartist, seconded the vote. Shaw, however, took the opportunity to assert that when it came to a consideration of what kind of reform measure should be introduced, anything short of manhood suffrage would not be acceptable to the working class.[67] In its evaluation of the meeting the Leeds Express reveals the true extent of Baines' control:

> Everything was arranged with the most elaborate indefiniteness. The speeches were characteristically objectless . . . the gentlemen separated . . . having said not one word with any meaning that could be construed in favour of any precise measure of reform.68

IV

Preparations for the nomination of parliamentary candidates in Leeds began on 4 April with separate preliminary meetings of the moderate and advanced sections of the Liberal party. The moderates sent a deputation to the advanced Liberals in an attempt to arrange the withdrawal of W.E. Forster as a candidate. It was to no avail and at a general meeting of the Leeds Reform Registration Association the next day the retirement of M.T. Baines was announced and the proceedings were adjourned because the moderates were not prepared to nominate their candidate. On 7 April the moderates made Edward Baines their unanimous choice and the next day of the Reform Association confirmed Baines and Forster as the candidates who would be presented at a meeting of Liberal electors. It was also agreed that other nominations would be allowed from the floor at the electors' meeting.[69]

G.S. Beecroft was confirmed as the Conservative party's choice at a meeting in the Conservative Association's offices on 5 April and he issued his address the next day. By 9 April the party had held organizational meetings in some wards.

Estimates of the number of Liberal electors at the meeting held on

12 April vary between one thousand six hundred and "upwards" of two thousand.[70] For two or three days preceding the meeting election squibs had been pasted on walls in support of Sir Peter Fairbairn, the mayor of Leeds, as a Liberal candidate and although he was nominated at the meeting he received the support of only approximately twenty electors. The Leeds Express suggested that Fairbairn, who was absent from the electors' meeting, was not responsible for his nomination; the Leeds Times simply referred to it as "an injudicious proceeding"; but the Mercury appears to have taken the nomination more seriously and suggested that Fairbairn's late appearance in the field, his absence, and the fear of increased division in the party had worked against him.

Fairbairn, who had first been elected to town council in 1836, returned to civic politics as an alderman in 1854 after an absence of several years but he let it be known that he took his seat as an independent. In town council on 7 August 1857, he had been critical of M.T. Baines' apparent failure to secure Leeds as the location of the probate court for the West Riding. When arrangements were being made for the visit of Queen Victoria to Leeds in September 1858 to open the town hall, Edward Baines made great efforts to have the Sunday School children assemble at the town hall, rather than Woodhouse Moor, but he was not successful. Fairbairn, as mayor, had overall responsibility for the arrangements. The animosity continued when the town council, with Fairbairn presiding, decided to deny the statue of Edward Baines senior a place in the vestibule of the town hall - an arrangement which had been agreed upon in 1855! Instead it was agreed that a statue of Queen Victoria, which Fairbairn had comissioned, should be sited in the lobby![71]

On the 28 October 1858, W.E. Forster had been a member of a group which had urged colliery owners to agree to arbitration in order to settle a strike in the Leeds and Wakefield district. Fairbairn, who had been knighted by the Queen at the town hall ceremonies, attended the meeting to urge the masters to reject arbitration.[72] The following day he spoke out at Barnsley against Bright's Birmingham speech, declaring that Bright's object was to set class against class.[73]

At the Liberal councillors' meeting at which Fairbairn's renomination to a second term as mayor was considered, his candidacy was supported by a majority of twenty-three votes to fifteen votes and indicates that there was considerable dissatisfaction with him.[74] It is clear that while Fairbairn might have run with Baines, as a fellow townsman, or with Forster as the Whig representative, his past actions had probably made him equally unacceptable to supporters of both the other candidates.

M.T. Baines wrote to Edward on 13 April agreeing with his brother that unless his return be

> made tolerably certain by a canvass, there might be serious risk of some wanton or malignant and unprincipled combination at last to defeat the best man - obnoxious to so many because he is the best man.[75]

Evidently Edward Baines must have written to his brother prior to the meeting of Liberal electors and it is obvious that he was planning a thorough campaign. The Liberal candidates were able to start their election activities on 14 April, four days earlier than Beecroft, who was detained in London on parliamentary business.[76] W.L. Guttsman, whose analysis of the general election of 1859 in Yorkshire cities contains several inaccuracies with respect to Leeds, claimed that the Liberal campaign was interrupted on Sunday and "Saint" Monday.[77] In fact, Baines and Forster attended meetings in the South and Hunslet wards on Monday 18 April, and while they did not have ward meetings on the following Monday it is suggested that it was because their ward campaign was essentially completed during the previous week. The only ward meetings held by the Liberals during the final week of the campaign were revisits to Kirkstall and the West ward on Tuesday 26 and Wednesday 27 April respectively. Beecroft started his campaign with a general meeting on Monday 18 April and the following Monday had a series of three ward meetings. Leeds electors were obviously ready to attend meetings on Mondays!

The issue of the franchise, upon which the election was supposedly fought, elicited questions at the meeting of the Liberal electors and at four of the Liberal ward meetings, while the question of control of beer and liquor outlets was raised at five Liberal ward meetings. The reports of Conservative ward meetings are less comprehensive but in three wards Beecroft faced questions on the extension of the franchise while no questions appear to have been asked about control of the liquor trade.

Baines and Forster declared themselves willing to support Lord John Russell's reform proposal which advocated a borough franchise based on £6 occupiers, and both candidates were in favour of the ballot. The Leeds Mercury proclaimed that "the great question of reform" was the main point at issue between Beecroft and the Liberals.[78] Nevertheless, in Leeds the reform issue was probably neutralized, as far as the electors were concerned, by Beecroft's support of an occupation franchise in boroughs of £8 value - an amendment he had been prepared to attempt had the Conservative Reform Bill reached the committee stage. In his speech to Conservative electors at the town hall on 18 April Beecroft avowed

> I should greatly deprecate anything like such an extension as would meet the views of one of the opposing parties. Is there to be no distinction made, as regards the worthiness of persons to enjoy the franchise?79

Beecroft was paraphrasing Baines and it was Forster, who did not conceal his support of household franchise at the meeting of Liberal electors, who was the odd man out.

Guttsman has noted the activities of the non-electors with respect to the reform question.[80] In Leeds two meetings were held, in the East and Hunslet wards, on 25 and 26 April to rally support for the Liberal candidates on nomination day. However, it was also non-electors who were asking Baines about his views on the "drink" question.[81] The opening salvo on the issue appears to have been 16 April when a letter from "An Old Licensed Victualler" was published in the Conservative newspaper and the writer wondered how any man connected with the trade of licensed victualler could support "a gentleman like Mr. E. Baines, who for the past twenty years has been your inveterate enemy".[82] Two days later Baines and Foster were interviewed by what the Leeds Mercury deemed to be a deputation from the Leeds Licensed Victuallers' Association and it was reported that the deputation was perfectly satisfied with the answers of the two candidates.[83] On Wednesday 20 April, a group of licensed victuallers had a meeting with Beecroft and issued a denial that the group which had met the Liberal candidates had been a deputation appointed by their Association.

The Leeds Intelligencer continued the attack on Baines by comparing statements made in the Mercury in 1854 with those made by him at the meeting with the licensed victuallers.[84] Baines retorted that failures in 1854 and 1855 to achieve a reduction of the hours which public houses were open had convinced him that it was not possible "at present" to carry out the object; his views on the desirability of closing public houses on Sundays remained unchanged![85] An analysis of the voting behaviour of the licensed victuallers and beerhouse keepers confirms that they tended to plump for Beecroft - 61.3 percent and 58.6 percent of their groups respectively - and, in the period under investigation both groups revealed their most significant inter party split voting in 1859 - 12.8 percent of the licensed victuallers and 15.0 percent of the beerhouse keepers. None of the victuallers split between Baines and Beecroft while seventeen voted for Forster and Beecroft. Only two beerhouse keepers split between Baines and the Conservative candidate while eighteen voted for Forster and Beecroft. If voters in either group plumped for a Liberal candidate it was invariably for Forster.[86]

The Conservatives pointed out, of course, the strange truce that had been established between the moderates and the radicals in the Liberal party and the partnership certainly produced convoluted logic from the Leeds Express. It was suggested that reformers who differed from Baines on the education question, the Maynooth grant, or the "legal application of temperance principles" should give him their vote because none of those items would be introduced for settlement in the next Parliament. Moderate reformers, on the other hand, should support

Forster, in spite of his support of household suffrage, because that too would not be raised as an issue in Parliament! The Leeds Mercury suggested that those who felt that Forster went further than was desirable on reform should still support him because "we shall need some far-going men in the House of Commons to drag or push on those . . . who would not voluntarily take a single step".[87]

V

A steady rain fell on the night before nomination day and the state of Woodhouse Moor was described as being a "perfect bog".[88] The rain continued on the day itself and, combined with the effects of a bleak wind, kept the crowd at between four and six thousand people.

John Shaw, a Chartist candidate, ascended the hustings and was accommodated in the same compartment as Beecroft; the half hour speech of the person who nominated him was inaudible and Shaw himself was met with loud singing, mud, and copper coins. He decided that he did not want a show of hands to be taken on his behalf. It is not surprising that the "working man's candidate" should have met with such a reception since Beecroft had between four and five hundred workmen assembled to support him. Frances Gillespie, who appears to have been unaware of the source of Beecroft's supporters, has inferred that the presence of that group was evidence of large working class support for the Conservative candidate![89] T.W. George, chairman of the Liberal election committee had sent a circular to the principal Liberal employers urging them to make arrangements to have their employees at the nomination to win the show of hands for Baines and Forster.[90]

The show of hands at the end of the three-hour meeting aroused a storm of controversy. As mayor, Sir Peter Fairbairn was ex-officio the returning officer and he announced that Baines and Beecroft had gained more support than Forster. He refused to take the vote again and he left the moor amidst considerable uproar, with mud being thrown at his carriage. Although theoretically an inaccurate prediction of the outcome of a poll, the show of hands was significant in Leeds for, in spite of the fact that both parties packed the nomination meeting with workmen - most of whom were non-electors - the results at the nominations in 1852 and 1857 had been confirmed by the polls. The results of the show of hands in 1859 were also a prediction of the result of the poll which was:

Baines	2343
Beecroft	2302
Forster	2280

In his speech at the official declaration and in an editorial Baines ascribed Forster's defeat to the fact that he was not a townsman and that Beecroft's "half Liberal tone" had appealed to the more timid reformers. Forster wrote to Baines two days after the election seeking his advice on whether to issue an address to his supporters by placard or to publish it in the newspapers. He consoled himself that

> The very large majority of the party it is plain enough split between us two and I shall never forget the heartiness of the co-operation of your friends and also yourself.91

The analysis of the poll reveals that Forster plumpers outnumbered those who plumped for Baines - ninety-four voting for the former and fifty-nine for the latter - but the number of those who split their votes between Baines and Beecroft exceeded the number of those who split between Forster and Beecroft by ninety-eight votes.[92] While there were more Forster 'loyalists' than Baines 'loyalists' the impact of the former group was more than counterbalanced by the moderates who voted Liberal-Conservative.

Edward Baines received the most votes due to a combination of several factors: his hereditary claim to a seat which had been held by both his father and brother counted for something; he was a Dissenter while the other candidates were Anglicans; he had many years of political experience, even though he had not sought election to office before, and he managed to retain control of the Leeds Reform Registration Association; he refrained from raising the matter of voluntary education; and he accepted the £6 franchise - which was probably what most of the electors thought was an acceptable extension of the suffrage.[93] Baines had succeeded in spite of the opposition of the licensed victuallers and beerhouse keepers. While he may have driven some of them to plump for Forster the majority voted for Beecroft and presumably Forster's defeat can, in part, be ascribed to Baines' inability to allay the fears of that group.

Finally, Baines had probably driven most Roman Catholic support away from the Liberal party. In March 1858, he had attacked the Committee of Council on Education for its support of Roman Catholic schools which, he asserted, amounted to support for the instruction of and thereby gave sanction to, religious error. Baines reconfirmed his belief that popery was "a vast ecclesiastical usurpation and tyranny, a pernicious corruption of Christianity, and adverse to the freedom of nations".[94] The Leeds Express published a letter signed by "A Catholic Elector" which, of course, condemned Baines and recalled that the

Catholics of Leeds had "severed themselves from a clique of *so-called* Liberals" in the parliamentary elections of the previous year.[95] The result of Baines' outburst was that one of the leaders of the Leeds Catholics, Joseph Dempsey Holdforth, the silk manufacturer, openly supported Beecroft and confessed at a Conservative party banquet, that he had only been acquainted with Beecroft for a comparatively short time.[96] Holforth's father, James, had given both his votes to the Liberal candidates in 1852; Joseph split his votes between M.T. Baines and Hall in 1857 and plumped for Beecroft in 1859. After Joseph's death his son, Walter, plumped for Beecroft in 1865.[97] While Catholic electors were a minority group, and, in the final analysis, Baines could afford to lose their support, his actions had, as in the case of the publicans, helped to give Beecroft more votes than Forster.

[1] Frederick R. Spark, *Memories of My Life*, (Leeds, 1913), p. 173. The full name of the newspaper was to become "Leeds and West Riding Express". Spark became the manager and editor in November 1858.

[2] *Leeds Express*, 26 December 1857.

[3] Ibid., 1 January 1858.

[4] Frederick Spark, *Memories*, p. 174. Spark eventually secured financial backing from three Conservatives in order to replace Carter's original partner; proof, he said, that their friendship was stronger than their politics!

[5] *Leeds Express*, 16 January 1858.

[6] Ibid., 30 January 1858.

[7] Ibid., 7 May 1859.

[8] *Leeds Mercury*, 3 May 1859.

[9] Ibid., 10 September 1857.

[10] Robert Adams, Henry B. Legg and Councillors Crowther and Newton were involved at the initial meeting on 30 April 1857. Newton and Legg were also Guardians. Adams and Newton, together with Richard Bissington and Councillor Joseph Barret, the Liberal solicitor, formed the deputation which had an interview with E.P. Bouverie, President of the Poor Law Board, on 12 May. *Leeds Mercury*, 2 May 1857. *Leeds Times*, 16 May 1857.

[11] *Leeds Times*, 20 February 1858.

[12] Ibid., 19 December 1857. The ratepayers were concerned about the impact of the financial collapse in the United States. Leeds managed to weather the storm with few difficulties.

[13] It was calculated that the town hall would cost £100,000. - or twice as much as the original estimate. The Guardians estimated the cost of the new workhouse at £25,000 - including the cost of land.

[14] *Leeds Mercury*, 6 February 1858.

15*Leeds Times*, 13 February 1858.

[16] Leeds Mercury, 6 February 1858. The Mercury's informant had accurately predicted the first, second, and third prize-winners! David Newton may have been the newspaper's source for, on 5 February at a Liberal nomination to select a candidate for the North West ward municipal bye-election he had predicted the result. The details of the meeting itself were not reported in the Mercury but the Leeds Times did record Newton's comments in its issue of 6 February 1858.

[17] Leeds Intelligencer, 13 March 1858.

[18] Leeds Times, 10 April 1858.

[19] Leeds Mercury, 6 April 1858. The newspaper conceded that the plans which had been selected were the best which had been submitted to the Board of Guardians!

[20] Leeds Express, 20 March 1858.

[21] Leeds Times, 17 April 1858.

[22] Ibid., The newspaper gave quantitative evidence of the apathy of the voters by reporting the decline of 244 votes from the Mill Hill election of 1857. Votes cast in the West ward decreased by 1,656 votes. The Conservatives swept both wards in 1858 with three of their candidates being elected in each of them.

[23] Leeds Intelligencer, 30 April 1859. The editor had received an invitation to a meeting, held on 4 January, which had been convened in order to consider Liberal strategy for the Guardians elections! He wondered whether the mistake had been made deliberately and noted that the reporter whom the newspaper had sent to the meeting had been allowed, before being asked to leave, to hear remarks that both parties should be represented equally on the Board. The editor retorted that if the Liberals were serious they should yield seats on town council to produce "this admirable equipoise in that important body". Ibid., 8 January 1859.

[24] Leeds Times, 7 November 1857.

[25] Ibid., The return of Joshua Calvert, an innkeeper who was nominated by his friends as a joke, serves as an example of the reason for the newspaper's disgust. In the following year Calvert appeared at the Holbeck ward meeting and caused an uproar when he told his constituents that he "did not care a fig for anyone". Leeds Times, 30 October, 1858.

[26] Leeds Times, 24 October, 7 November 1857. Leeds Intelligencer, 31 October 1857.

[27] Leeds Intelligencer, 7 November 1857.

[28] Ibid., 1 August 1857.

[29] Leeds Mercury, 3 November 1857.

[30] The Liberals claimed a net gain of 339 voters while the Conservative newspaper conceded a Liberal gain of 141. Leeds Express, Leeds Intelligencer, 9 October 1858.

[31] Leeds Mercury, 10 July 1852.

[32] Leeds Intelligencer, 23 October 1858.

[33] Leeds Mercury, 30 October 1858. The Mercury also declared that it had never heard of a Liberal constituency electing a Conservative nor vice versa. It was obviously ignoring the realities of Leeds parliamentary politics!

[34] Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Times, 6 November 1858.

[35] E.P. Hennock, Fit and Proper Persons: Ideal and Reality in Nineteenth Century Urban Government, (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1973), p. 217.

[36] In the 1857 bye-election Beecroft had a fifty vote majority over Mills. Leeds Borough Election Pollbook, 5 June 1857.

[37] Leeds Times, 26 March 1857.

[38] Ibid., Queen Victoria visited Leeds in September 1858 to open the Town Hall.

[39] Leeds Mercury, 10 November 1857.

[40] Ibid., 9 October 1858. M.T. Baines had written to Edward Baines on 20 February 1858, informing him that the cabinet had "come to the unanimous resolution to resign . . . after the vote of the House of Commons". [On the Conspiracy to Murder Bill] Baines MSS 46, Leeds City Archives.

[41] Leeds Mercury, 30 October 1858.

[42] Ibid., 13 November 1858.

[43] Leeds Express, 13 November 1858.

[44] Leeds Times, 20 November 1858. The principles were: 1. that an extension of the suffrage was desirable; 2. that the franchise of small boroughs should be given to large towns; 3. that the duration of Parliaments ought to be shortened; 4. and that the ballot should be adopted in elections.

[45] Ibid., 11 December 1858. It is probable that John Bright would have been the least acceptable 'star'.

[46] M.T. Baines to E. Baines, 18 December 1858, Baines MSS 46, Leeds City Archives.

[47] Leeds Mercury, 24 December 1858, Leeds Times, 11 December 1858.

[48] *Leeds Mercury*, 24 December 1858.

[49] Councillor Newton's obduracy may have been kindled as a result of the Mill Hill municipal election. Although the Liberals had returned both of their candidates a quarrel had broken out between those who wished to celebrate the victory at the White Horse Inn and Councillor Newton, who led a group which believed that the festivities should take place at the Queen's Head Inn, the Liberal "headquarters" in the ward. Both celebrations took place on the same evening and both events attracted approximately sixty supporters. The *Leeds Mercury* gave extensive coverage to the meeting at the White Horse and subtitled its report of the proceedings as "The Reform Movement". The White Horse dinner was attended by the newly-elected councillors and appears to have attracted the more influential Liberals.

[50] *Leeds Mercury*, 24 December 1858.

[51] *Leeds Express*, 1 January 1859.

[52] *Leeds Mercury*, 8 January 1859. Baines appears to have become more conservative on the franchise issue. In 1851, he had been quite willing to make the parliamentary franchise equal to that upon which town councillors were elected. See above Chapter 2 footnote 53.

[53] *Leeds Mercury*, 15 January 1859.

[54] Ibid., 20 January 1859.

[55] *Leeds Times*, *Leeds Express*, 22 January 1859.
The *Leeds Times* remarked:
"No one will pretend to say . . . that the present ten pound electors are the most intellectual set of people that . . . could be found in the United Kingdom".

The *Leeds Express* declared:
"There is something exceedingly offensive in the cant that would deny the franchise to honest working men, under the plea that they are too ignorant to use it wisely, whilst . . . a large proportion of the representation of the country . . . (is) in the hands of men who indicate their claim to it on the ground . . . of their personal interests".

[56] *Leeds Express*, *Leeds Times*, 29 January 1859. Councillors Carter and Billington were the representatives from Leeds. The Committee had been established as a result of the Bright Conference at Bradford on 17 January.

[57] *Leeds Mercury*, 1 February 1859.

[58] J. Bright to E. Baines, 24 October 1859, Baines MSS 2, Leeds City Archives.

[59] *Leeds Mercury*, 1 March 1859.

[60] M.T. Baines to E. Baines, 19 February 1859, MSS. 46, Leeds City Archives. Baines did not write his official letter of resignation to the Reform Registration Association until 4 April 1859. *Leeds Mercury*, 7 April 1859.

[61] *Leeds Mercury*, *Leeds Express*, 5 March 1859.

[62] *Leeds Express*, 5 March 1859.

[63] Ibid., 12 March 1859. The newspaper appears to have penetrated the innermost councils of Edward Baines' "defeated dozen"! It also attacked Baines in an editorial on 19 March and called for "No more haughty dictation. No more arrogant stiff-neckedness".

[64] *Leeds Times*, 12 March 1859. *Leeds Mercury*, 17 March 1859.

[65] *Leeds Times*, 19 March 1859.

[66] Ibid.

[67] *Leeds Intelligencer*, *Leeds Times*, *Leeds Express*, *Leeds Mercury*, 19 March 1859. A crowd of approximately six thousand was estimated at the meeting which was held in the town hall.

[68] *Leeds Express*, 26 March 1859.

[69] *Leeds Mercury*, 5, 7 April 1859. James Kitson, Sir Peter Fairbairn, T.W. George, Darnton Lupton and Joseph Cliffe were also mentioned, at the "moderates" meeting, as possible candidates.

[70] The *Leeds Mercury* was the most conservative in its estimate, the *Leeds Times* estimated two thousand in the audience and the *Leeds Express* provided the most liberal estimate. *Leeds Mercury*, 14 April 1859, *Leeds Times*, *Leeds Express*, 16 April 1859.

[71] Fairbairn declared that Baines' statue would be made ridiculous by placing it in the vestibule which, he thought, should be retained for illustrious personages! *Leeds Express*, 14 August 1858.

[72] *Leeds Express*, *Leeds Times*, 30 October 1858.

[73] *Leeds Express*, 6 November 1858. Bright denied Fairbairn's charge, without naming the Leeds mayor, in a speech at the London Reform Conference of 5 November. *Leeds Times*, 13 November 1858.

[74] *Leeds Express*, 13 November 1858. The *Mercury* had revealed the details of voting at the "private meeting" one week before and claimed that the vote was twenty-four to fifteen. *Leeds Mercury*, 6 November 1858.

[75] M.T. Baines to E. Baines, 13 April 1859, Baines MSS 46, Leeds City Archives.

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[76] Edward Baines was unable to attend the outdoor meetings at Bramley and Pudsey due to an attack of lumbago.

[77] W.L. Guttsman, "The General Election of 1859 in the Cities of Yorkshire," International Review of Social History 2 (1957): 249. Other inaccuracies include: "E.A. Beacroft" p. 243 n. 2 for G.S. Beecroft; "104" votes plumped for Forster p. 254 n. 3 - the Conservative analysis gave Forster 108 plumpers and the later Liberal analysis in the poll book gave Forster 94 plumpers. "James" Shaw p. 257 for John Shaw. Guttsman is also inaccurate when he suggests Friday as the first day of the Liberal campaign, it was Thursday at noon and his calculation of at least fifteen meetings in a six-day period is wrong. From Thursday 14 April to Tuesday 19 April inclusive (the first six days of the campaign in the wards) ten meetings were held. There was no six-day period in which fifteen meetings were held.

[78] Leeds Mercury, 19 April 1859.

[79] Leeds Intelligencer, 19 April 1859.

[80] Guttsman, "General Election of 1859", p. 252.

[81] Non-electors raised the matter at the Armley-Wortley meeting and the Holbeck meeting on 14 April and in New Wortley on 21 April although the non-elector at the last meeting actually supported Baines and Forster.

[82] Leeds Intelligencer, 16 April 1859.

[83] Leeds Mercury, 19 April 1859.

[84] Leeds Intelligencer, 23 April 1859.

[85] Leeds Mercury, 26 April 1859.

[86] A survey of the 1859 poll book shows that at least thirteen of the sixteen beerhouse keepers who plumped Liberal were Forster supporters. Seven of the eight licensed victuallers who plumped Liberal cast their ballot for Forster.

[87] Leeds Intelligencer, 16 April 1859. Leeds Express, 23 April 1859. Leeds Mercury, 28 April 1859.

[88] Leeds Express, 30 April 1859.

[89] Frances E. Gillespie, Labour and Politics in England 1850-1867 (Duke University Press, 1927; reprint ed., London: Frank Cass, 1966), p. 184.

[90] Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, 30 April 1859. Shaw had held a meeting on 28 April and had claimed that he wanted to keep the principles of David Urquhart before the public. (Urquhart had received little sympathy in Leeds when he had attended a meeting in order to oppose the Crimean War), Leeds Times, 30 April 1859.

[91] W.E. Forster to E. Baines, 2 May 1859, Baines MSS 94, Leeds City Archives.

[92] The Liberal analysis of the poll is used rather than the one which was produced by the Conservatives soon after the poll. It was the Liberal analysis which was used as the record in the poll book and which was printed by David Green.

[93] Lowerson has concluded that 1859 marked the apex of Baines' local influence and the beginning of its steady decline. Lowerson, "Political Career of Sir Edward Baines", p. 186.

[94] Leeds Mercury, 13 March 1858.

[95] Leeds Express, 20 March 1858. The Express felt that Baines' attacks on the Roman Catholics did not "perhaps emanate from the worst spirit of religious intolerance" and that in attacking the Catholics Baines' main object had been "to interfere with the action of the Committee of Council" but it is somewhat difficult to believe that Leeds Roman Catholics would have reacted in that manner!

[96] Leeds Intelligencer, 16 July 1859. The chairman of the Armley banquet made an unscheduled toast to the Roman Catholic electors who had supported Beecroft.

[97] James Holdforth was elected mayor of Leeds for 1838-39, the first Roman Catholic mayor to be elected in England since the Reformation. Taylor, Biographia Leodiensis, p. 499.

CHAPTER 5

1859 - 65: CONSERVATIVES TRIUMPHANT

> We do not hesitate to say that if Mr. Baines were to undertake a personal canvass of the constituency to whom he owes his seat in the House of Commons, he would find that the (Franchise Bill) . . . was a source of greater weakness than strength to him.
>
> Leeds Intelligencer, 6 May 1865.

I

After experiencing two elections and one bye-election within a twenty-five month period, Leeds entered a six-year period which was uninterrupted by parliamentary electoral activity. However, with Edward Baines assuming the role of the conscience of the Government with respect to parliamentary reform, there was, in Leeds at least, a sustained interest in the franchise reform question. Baines' introduction of bills in 1861, 1864 and 1865 to reduce the borough franchise from a L10 to a L6 occupancy served as focal points for the activities of the Leeds Working Men's Parliamentary Reform Association.

While it has been claimed that Baines had to face "the ambivalent situation of proposing reform . . . that was too extreme for parliament yet too moderate to inspire public support" it is equally true that he was proposing a measure which was also too extreme for many Leeds Liberal electors.[1] Baines justified his proposal on the grounds that it would enfrachise the "industrious" and "sober" segments of the working class - those who had benefited from exposure to education in the thirty years since the first Reform Act. Yet, it was clear that even if his bill passed it would not prevent the introduction of manhood suffrage. Perhaps Baines thought that his proposal would stem the tide of democracy but many electors believed that it would open the floodgates.

In addition to the Liberal-oriented LWMPRA, a Conservative Working Men's Assocation was formed. While both organizations differed in their objectives and methods it could be claimed that they afforded a voice to those Leeds working men who were inclined to political activity and might, for one city at least, help to explain the political calm which was characteristic of the late 1850's and early 1860's. The LWMPRA concentrated its attention on the national objective of an extension of the franchise and therefore tended to look beyond the arena of local politics. It failed to reach its goal. On the other hand the Conservative Working Men's Association was established with the objective of increasing Conservative representation on bodies at the local level. It achieved some success and thereby helped to secure the return of G.S. Beecroft to Parliament by virtue of its concentration on basic political organization within existing structures.

Both the LWMPRA and the CWMA had strong links with two newspapers. Elihu Finnie and William Hickes, respectively president and secretary of the LWMPRA, were compositors at the Leeds Mercury. Edwin Batley, the secretary of the CWMA was a compositor in the office of the Leeds Intelligencer. These links serve to emphasize the continuing importance of Leeds newspapers as focal points for political activity in the town.

A quantitative examination of political activity in the institutions of municipal government reveals a marked difference between the first and second halves of the period 1852-65. If the percentages of 'new' members of the Town Council, and the Board of Guardians and Highway Surveyors are taken as indicators of electoral activity at the local level then one must conclude that in contrast to the period 1852-53 to 1856-57, the seven-year period ending in 1864-65 witnessed a decline in interest.[2] The calculations shown in the table below:

NEW MEMBERS	PERIOD	
	1852-53 to 1857-58	1858-59 to 1864-65
	%	%
Councillors	67.7	40.2
Guardians	50.0	17.5
Highway Surveyors	28.1	18.0

Nevertheless, the number of contested Guardians' elections increased slightly from 5.3 wards per year in the period 1852-53 to 1857-58 to 5.6 wards per year in the seven year period ending 1864-65. Contested elections for seats on Town Council increased from 6.2 wards per year in the first period to 7.4 wards per year in the period 1858-59 to 1864-65. This seems to indicate that while the level of interest in terms of seeking seats on the Board of Guardians or Town Council may have been maintained, the incumbents tended to retain their places if they sought re-election.

Although the elections of Highway Surveyors would, from the statistical evidence, appear to have been uneventful they were not carried out completely free of controversy. In 1860, a dispute occurred which was finally settled in Court with the result that six 'new' Surveyors were turned out of office. In the following year a poll was conducted for election to the 1861-62 Board and ten of those elected were new members. Thus, once again, in spite of indicators that might suggest a decline in interest there were two consecutive elections which caused political excitement.[3]

II

Under the chairmanship of Councillor Carter, a "rather boisterous" annual meeting for the election of Highway Surveyors was held on 26 March 1860. John Chiesman nominated a list which contained the names of sixteen members of the 1859-60 Board. An amended list which included only ten members of the previous year's Board was proposed also and, after a show of hands, was deemed by Carter to have been carried. He left the chair and was "arrested" by Councillor Newton at the door and subjected to a demand for a poll. The subsequent election resulted in six of those on the amended list being successful but Councillor Newton was still dissatisfied and challenged both the manner in which Carter had called the annual meeting and the way in which he had conducted the poll.[4]

Newton, however, came under attack from both radical newspapers; the Leeds Times accused him of involving the town in the "turmoil of a party question simply to gratify . . . (his) miserable ambition" and the Leeds Express asserted that Newton was neither wise nor prudent but rather "an offensively fussy individual". Nevertheless, the issue for the public was not about the manner in which Carter had conducted the elections, but whether or not some members of the "old" Board had been entertained by contractors who subsequently provided inferior materials at inflated prices![5] Newton was placed in the position of appearing to defend that conduct. Furthermore, his decision to pursue the matter of the legality of the election at the Quarter Sessions had the effect of suspending normal activity on the part of the Highway Surveyors.

A crowded public meeting was held in the Civil Court at the Town Hall on 23 April 1860, at which it was hoped to clarify the position of the Board relative to the legal proceedings. Joseph Wright and Henry Price, two respected Conservatives, were among the five councillors who were present. George Linsley, who had been elected to the Board as one of the 'new' members, pointed out the injury which the election dispute might cause the Liberal party, especially since the controversy had "orginated from one of themselves". John Shaw, one of the ousted members, provided evidence that the split had caused disruption within the 'party of all shades'. Able to obtain a hearing at the meeting only with some difficulty, and subjected to constant interruption during his speech, he sat down amid groans and hisses. Although Shaw was eventually reinstated as a member of the Board and continued to serve on it, except for one year, until it was dissolved in 1866, he plumped for the Conservative Beecroft at the 1865 parliamentary election.

Elijah Rawlinson, another Surveyor who had lost his seat, adopted a completely different stance: accepting his defeat graciously; asserting that the elections had been conducted in exactly the same manner as on former occasions; and decrying the actions of the protestors.[6] In contrast to Shaw, who had attended the parliamentary nomination of 1859 as a Chartist candidate, Rawlinson did not return as a member of the Board choosing instead to concentrate his efforts on parliamentary reform as a member of the LWMPRA.

A hearing before the Recorder of Leeds in June 1860, resulted in a reversal of the election results and the six 'new' Surveyors were succeeded by those who had been displaced in the election.

Dr. Fraser has summarized the final years of the existence of the Board of Highway Surveyors as being a period in which a "radical" hegemony was maintained with periodic assaults by "respectable Liberals".[7] With respect of the election of 1861, he has concluded that the radicals fended off a "respectable Liberal" attack but fails to mention the fact that seven members of the 1861-62 Board were Conservatives. The three new Liberal members were a manufacturing chemist, a provision dealer and a stuff printer, the last two cast all their parliamentary votes in the period 1852 to 1859 for Liberal candidates. The voting behaviour suggests that they were not extreme radicals. There was no radical hegemony. Furthermore, two of the Conservatives served on the Board for an additional year, another served until 1865 and the others continued to occupy seats on the Board until its dissolution in 1866. In 1862, another Conservative was elected and he remained a Surveyor until 1866. The Liberal bookkeeper who was elected in that year had cast all his parliamentary votes for the Liberal candidates, like his colleagues who had been elected in the previous year.

Apart from the small attendance at the 1862 annual meeting the only noteworthy feature was that William Middleton, the Conservative chairman of the Board of Guardians, nominated the nineteen candidates for the 1862-63 Board of Highway Surveyors and his list was seconded by Liberal Councillor Thomas Brumfit! Obviously the composition of the Board of Highway Surveyors was far from being dominated by the radicals when the Liberals and Conservatives could unite on a slate of candidates. In 1863, Conservative Councillor Henry Price seconded the nomination of a list which included a Conservative "gentleman" as the only new member on the 1863-64 Board. The following year the three new members included a Conservative who was a partner in a firm of iron founders, steam engine, hydraulic press and boiler manufacturers and a wholesale chemist who switched his allegiance from the Liberals to plump for Beecroft in the 1865 parliamentary election. The 1865 election for Highway Surveryors was also carried out with no dissentient voices.

It seems clear that after 1861 all parties had reached a *modus vivendi* with respect to the membership of the Board of Highway Surveyors. Only two members of the Board of 1865-66 had not voted in any of the parliamentary elections held from 1852-65 and only they, together with six other members, might, on the basis of past voting patterns in parliamentary elections or political labels applied to them in earlier years, be regarded as being the radical component of the Board. Another five could be classified as Liberal rather than Radical and four others were definitely Conservatives. The remaining Surveyor, as noted above, deserted the Liberals - at least as far as the parliamentary election of 1865 is concerned. The final years of the Board of Highway Surveyors were quiescent, not because there was a lack of interest on the part of the political parties but rather because a balance of power had been established which was satisfactory to all groups. It was suggested in chapter four that a reduced level of working class interest in the Board of Highway Surveyors owed something to the revival of the issue of parliamentary reform. It seems likely that in the period 1859-65 the LWMPRA attracted some who might have focussed their energies on the municipal body.

III

After their success in the 1859 Guardians' election it was to be expected that a great effort would be made by the Liberals to retain their majority on the Board. The Conservatives, of course, were equally determined to restore themselves as the dominant party but they experienced a threat to the system of elections for Guardians during the course of the 1859-60 year.

Both political parties in Leeds were represented equally on the Board of Overseers, a political balance that was based, presumably, on the fact that the Board performed a function which members of both parties accepted as necessary.[8] In what was partly an attempt to regain some of the prestige which they had enjoyed prior to the implementation of the New Poor Law in the town in 1844, the Overseers decided to apply to Parliament for legislation which would give them the power to amend rates and to appoint and discharge poor rate assessors and collectors. After 1844 the authority in those areas rested with the Board of Guardians. Since Leeds township was a single unit for Poor Law purposes, not in Union with neighbouring townships, the Leeds Overseers could not even claim to act as protectors of Leeds' interests against the claims of others. Thus they were prevented from gaining the prestige that was available to Overseers in some other localities. While they performed the essential service of supervising the collection of rates the Overseers had, in the words of the Leeds Intelligencer, "lost all the circumstance of authority and discretion". The newspaper pointed out that they would, if the proposal were successful, gain patronage at the expense of the Guardians and it urged the Ratepayers' Association to "ventilate" the affair to determine the desirability of the proposed bill.[9]

The Overseers, however, were seeking more than an enhancement of their own status. They also hoped to reduce the use of proxies in Guardians' elections and, generally, to have the elections conducted in the same manner as municipal contests. Initially, both Liberal and Conservative Guardians felt that the matter was an affront to their Board, complaining that at the very least they should have been consulted prior to the insertion of the election clauses in the proposed bill. Unity of the parties was not maintained and within one week the Liberal Guardians had, under the leadership of Henry Bailey Legg, the Liberal chairman of the Board, thrown their support behind the Overseers. This action was taken in spite of the fact that the Leeds Mercury predicted that the bill would stand little chance of success and that the money to promote it would be "entirely thrown away".[10] The newspaper believed that Parliament would be unlikely to pass legislation for one town which would have an effect on general law. Furthermore, it was reported at a Board of Guardians' meeting on 21 December that the Poor Law Board would oppose the clauses in the Overseers' bill which related to the election of Guardians because "they did not feel justified in assenting to a departure from the practice which prevailed in all unions in the Kingdom".[11]

The information about the intention of the Poor Law Board did not prevent a meeting of the Leeds Ratepayers' Association on 29 December. Leonard Hicks, who had been a Conservative member of the Board of

Guardians from 1854-58, served as chairman. Councillor Middleton, who had been ousted from the Board in the April 1859 election, reported on the origin and objectives of the Association - which suggests that it had been inactive for some time - and he recorded his objections to the Overseers' bill. Other prominent Conservatives at the meeting were Councillor William Longley and Guardian Nathaniel Sharpe. It had taken more than one month from the date that the Leeds Intelligencer, had first urged the Association to take action until enough momentum had been generated for a meeting to take place. While the Association had eventually been roused and had fulfilled its duty by condemning the bill, it left the manner of the opposition to the discretion of the executive committee.[12] Although the danger of interference in Guardians' elections might have receded, the bill's provisions for an extension of the powers of the Overseers remained a threat to the power of the Board of Guardians which, in most years, was exercised by the Conservatives. Since they were a minority on the Board at the time of the Overseers' Bill it had been necessary for the Conservatives to generate 'pressure from without' by resurrecting the Ratepayers' Association. The dispute was only settled after the Guardians' election of 1860, when, on 27 April, the Overseers and the Ratepayers' Association reached a compromise whereby nearly one-third of the clauses in the proposed parliamentary bill were deleted.

The revision of owners' claims for the election of Guardians in 1860 resulted in a net gain of eighty-one for the Liberals.[13] Initially the nominations for both parties included "official" candidates and those who did not have the sanction of their respective parties. All but one of the "independent" Liberal candidates were withdrawn and the Leeds Mercury concluded

> There are no doubt occasions when . . . individuals should exercise their rights uncontrolled by the party to which they . . . belong, but as a rule such . . . action is open to serious objection, for, from its necessarily erratic nature, it tends to great embarrassment, and engenders considerable ill-feeling.[14]

The Mercury had been alarmed by twenty-six Liberal nominations for seats on the eighteen member Board. In contrast to its contemporary, the Leeds Express confessed that it never could "see what the cries of Liberal and Conservative had to do with the election of Guardians".[15] An equal number of the representatives of both parties were elected to the 1860-61 Board and in an effort to console the Conservatives the Leeds Intelligencer suggested that they had won a moral victory since the nine Conservative Guardians had garnered 1,634 more votes than their Liberal counterparts![16]

It was inevitable that the deadlock on the Board would be a cause of friction and a dispute arose about the election of a chairman. The matter was only settled after three months when the case had reached Court of Queen's Bench and Henry Bailey Legg agreed to resign as chairman. His successor was a Conservative. Both Leeds MP's expressed their concern over the issue of the chairmanship and in a letter to Legg on 30 April, which was not published until late July, Edward Baines had taken a point of view which was at variance with the editors of the Leeds Mercury. In order to avoid such an unpleasant state of things in future, he suggested, the elections of Guardians and management of the poor should "cease to be a matter of party contest". According to Baines there was "scarcely another Board of Guardians where political party . . . (was) allowed to influence the elections and proceedings". Trouble, expense, and bad feeling would be eliminated if the ward committees of both parties co-operated and the committees of the "two great registration societies offered their friendly offices".[17] The senior editor obviously had a different perspective of the realities of Leeds politics when he sat in the Imperial Parliament!

Thirteen Conservatives were elected to the Board of Guardians in 1861, and while the Leeds Times despaired, in general terms, of having pure elections in towns where political feelings ran high and where the election system was so open to fraud, it did not make any specific charges about the Leeds elections.[18] The following year the Conservatives lost one seat but the elections were, once again, carried out with no accusations of bribery or fraud. In 1863, there was a contest in only one ward but both Conservative incumbents were returned and so the relative strength of the parties remained the same. Although the 1863 elections for the Leeds township had been carried on with no evidence of corrupt practices, such was not the case in the election for the Hunslet Board. Benjamin Idle, the chairman of the Hunslet Board and a Conservative town councillor from 1856-61, was given the benefit of the doubt by the magistrates and acquitted on a charge of forging a signature on a voting paper.[20] In both 1864 and 1865 there were contests in three wards in the election of Guardians for Leeds township but no charges of wrongdoing were made.

To what extent Edward Baines' opinions had any impact on the reduction of party warfare in the elections for Guardians is difficult to assess. Certainly, there was a decline in the spirit with which the annual contests were carried out. After the upset in 1859 and the tie in 1860, the Conservatives regained control of the Board for the rest of the period. In 1862, the Board, the Ratepayers' Association, and even the radical Leeds Times had challenged the methods used by the Overseers to collect and keep account of the rates. When the radical press either supported a Conservative dominated Association, as in the case of the Leeds Times, or decried all political influence in the Guardians' elections as did the Leeds Express, then obviously the significance of the Board of Guardians as an arena for party political warfare was reduced. In one of its semi-satirical "Sketches in Leeds" the Leeds Express provided, in a serious vein, what seems to be an appropriate comment on the Board of Guardians.

> After all, the business of the Board is transacted, on the whole, in a highly satisfactory manner, and the ratepayers have reason to feel proud of, and thankful to, the gentlemen who have undertaken, at so much sacrifice to themselves, the office of Guardians of the poor for the township of Leeds.21

IV

Buoyed up, no doubt, by their success in the 1859 parliamentary election the Conservative organization approached the election of that year for the 'municipal parliament' with élan. At the revision court the party had raised, once again, the issue of registration in more than one ward and it had objected to the registration claims of approximately fourteen hundred voters. After consultation with legal advisers the mayor, Sir Peter Fairbairn, decided that the practice of former years should be adhered to since an appeal to the Court of Queen's Bench was open to anyone who wished to pursue the matter. In addition, William Gregory, one of the Conservative registration agents, objected to persons being on the register if they had received parish relief in the previous year but that tactic was to no avail. Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that most of the Conservative objections were disallowed, the party was able to record a net gain of thirty-five voters over Liberal claims and objections.

On 6 October, the revision court closed with both Liberal and Conservative agents thanking the mayor for his impartial conduct and with Sir Peter complimenting them, in turn, for engaging in the revision with "such an absence of party spirit".[22] However, by 15 October both parties were said to be "straining every nerve to return their men".[23] At the end of the month it was recorded that there would be "a warmer political contest than has taken place for some time" and the Conservatives acknowledged that they had been actively preparing for the election for some weeks.[24]

The election together with a bye-election, which was held soon after due to the elevation of a Liberal councillor to the aldermanic bench, resulted in a net gain of only one seat for the Conservatives.[25] Apart from Headingley, where they were not opposed, the Conservatives contested every ward and, therefore, the overall result was a disappointment for them. The only consolation for the Leeds Intelligencer was that it had been assured that the party had conducted the election in strict accord with the 1859 Municipal Corporation Act and Conservatives had refrained from providing refreshments for "a certain class of voters". On the other hand the Liberals, it was claimed, had used the seductive influence of "beer . . . more potent liquors - if not solid cash . . . in more wards than one on the east side of Briggate".[26]

Another feature of the 1859 municipal elections was the low voter participation - in spite of an estimated increase of three thousand ratepayers on the burgess list for that year. The introduction of a half yearly rating system and the "urgency" of the overseers in collecting the rates had proved effective in enlarging the number of those eligible to vote but that had not produced more voters.[27] On the other hand, the Leeds Mercury had published an editorial entitled "Warning for the Municipal Elections" in which it drew the attention of voters to the exposure of corrupt practices in some of the 1859 parliamentary elections. It was the editor's belief that many Members of Parliament wished to restrict the municipal franchise in order to eliminate bribery during the elections for that level of government too.[28] It was probably the combination of the threat of penalties and the absence of Conservative treating which were factors in reducing voter participation in the 1859 Leeds municipal elections. Only ten thousand of the twenty-three thousand registered electors actually cast their ballots - an overall average of 43.5 percent of the electorate. Participation in Bramley was only 16.0 percent but that may be explained by the fact that Francis Ferns, the solictor, was entered as the Conservative candidate on the eve of the election and probably, due to the size of the ward, many electors were unaware that a contest was taking place. The best participation rate occurred in the wealthiest ward, Mill Hill, where 72.8 percent of the electors voted. In its summary, the Leeds Express concluded that the elections had been "characterised more by business-like action than vapid excitement".[29]

At the 1860 municipal revision the agents from both parties agreed not to object to duplicate voters. Nevertheless, William Gregory, the Conservative agent, was able to sustain his objections to individuals in the North East ward who had received poor relief during the preceding twelve months. In spite of Conservative gains in that ward the overall result of the revision left the Liberals with a gain of eighty-seven on claims and objections.[30]

While the Leeds Express expected that the municipal election of 1860 would be one of the keenest that the town had witnessed for many years, the Conservatives contested only half of the twelve wards - including their traditional stronghold of Headingley where Francis Ferns was opposed by a Liberal candidate.[31] The Conservatives returned two councillors which merely maintained their strength on Council. Once again the Leeds Mercury had drawn attention to the "low and degrading corruption which . . . (was) creeping into some electoral bodies" and warned that the working classes were not only in danger of losing their municipal franchise but were also likely to be prevented from gaining the parliamentary franchise.[32] In response to a rumour that bribery was being resorted to in Mill Hill an unusual torchlight meeting had been held on 30 October. A crowd of between three hundred and four hundred listened to speeches from Councillor Carter, David Green, and others which "advocated the rights of the working classes and strongly urged upon the electors present the necessity of honestly using their franchise".[33] At any event, the election was carried out in the borough as a whole with treating considered to be below average, which the Leeds Times felt was "an evident sign of the advent of a healthier state of things".[34] The late entry of Henry Stead, the maltster, as a Conservative candidate forced an election in the North ward where there were many Irish electors. Although "a consideration" was waiting to tempt them at Cowgill's London Tavern only a few

Irishmen were "prepared to sell their birthright for a mess of pottage" and the Leeds Express concluded that "even Irishmen have consciences and are sufficiently intelligent" to be aware of the party which would seek an extension of voting privileges.[35]

The West ward was, as so often, where differences within the Liberal ranks caused an election contest. George Tatham, Spanish leather dresser, and Thomas Edward Plint, sharebroker, decided to fight the election on the temperance issue and they were opposed by Charles George, the retiring Liberal councillor and George Scotson. The teetotallers led the poll until noon "when the workshops were let loose" and the non-teetotallers were returned.[36]

Finally, William St. James Wheelhouse, the Conservative barrister who had contested the East ward unsuccessfully in 1859, was returned for Mill Hill. At first the Conservatives had sought an accommodation with the Liberals, as they had when Wheelhouse had contested Mill Hill in 1858, but the offer to "elect" one representative from each party was refused and both parties fielded two candidates. Wheelhouse and Ferns, in Headingley, were the only Conservatives elected in 1860.[37]

In October 1861, the Leeds Mercury published its annual denunciation of bribery and corruption in municipal elections claiming that there was "scarcely a nobler spectacle than virtuous poverty spurning the seduction of a gift".[38] On a more practical note, the Leeds Express urged electors to vote for Liberals because they were "the best managers of our local affairs" and, of equal importance, "they have it in their power materially to assist our Liberal government by staunch support of their measures". Meanwhile, the Leeds Intelligencer concluded that the compromise which had been reached in Mill Hill in 1861, whereby each party would return a representative, was a sign that there was a growing feeling in favour of excluding party politics from local government.[39] In reality, then, the truce which had been suggested in the previous year had probably been refused because of Liberal antipathy to Wheelhouse rather than a distaste for an accommodation with the Conservatives.

Only the elections in four wards roused any extraordinary interest. A reunification of the Liberals in the West ward was effected when George Tatham, the teetotaller, was elected with George Brook, the retiring Liberal councillor. A third unoffical Liberal candidate had forced a contest but Tatham had not made the temperance question "offensively prominent". In spite of an alleged "wholesale purchase of votes" in the North East ward the retiring Conservative councillor, William Longley, failed in his bid for re-election.[40] However, basket makers and butchers in Kirkgate ward were accused of having succumbed to bribes offered to secure support for retiring Conservative William Wray and he was successful in his bid![41] In Holbeck ward two Conservative candidates were unable to break the Liberal monopoly of council seats. Overall the Conservatives suffered a net loss of three seats on Council.

The attempt of the Leeds Express to rally support for the Liberals on the basis of parliamentary needs rather than local requirements suggests that there was a dearth of municipal issues upon which to fight elections. In fact, in the period 1862-64 controversy seemed to erupt between elections rather than at them. Local institutions in Leeds became subject to 'pressure from without' during 1862 and 1863 mainly as a result of proposals to increase the salaries of senior officers of public bodies. In 1862, Leeds town council had to withstand the onslaught of two series of ward meetings which were called, in one case, to protest a proposed increase in the salary of W.E. Hepper, the former Liberal alderman, who had managed to get himself appointed to the post of borough treasurer in 1858.

The attack on Hepper's salary increase began at a North East ward meeting on 5 May 1862. John Shaw, the former Chartist, urged the audience to oppose the increase of £100 on the grounds that Leeds should not follow the example of other boroughs which made reckless use of their money by paying exhorbitant salaries. Nor should an increase be paid in a period of commercial distress. Meetings were held in the West and Kirkgate wards on 8 and 9 May respectively. Town council's finance committee bowed to public pressure and ruled that it was an inopportune time for a salary advance and so Hepper withdrew his application for it. As far as the Leeds Times was concerned the ward meetings had been a legitimate and constitutional influence on the council.[42]

On 26 May, a second round of ward meetings were initiated in Mill Hill to consider allegations of pecuniary gain made by council employees at the Crown Point night soil depôt. A meeting was held in Kirkgate on 28 May and in the West ward during the following evening. In contrast to the meetings which were called to oppose the salary increase of the borough treasurer, the 'manure meetings' were initiated by the Conservatives. It appeared that unless tips were forthcoming the employees at the manure depot either kept boats waiting for loading or loaded the "worst" manure into them. Pressure was maintained during the following week with adjourned ward meetings held in Mill Hill on 2

June and in Kirkgate two days later. A final West ward meeting was held on 12 June. During the course of the meetings it became clear that the Conservatives were making the dismissal of William Swale, the chief inspector of nuisances, the issue and Francis Ferns made an unsuccessful attempt to achieve it in a special meeting of town council on 9 July.[43]

The municipal revision of 1862 resulted in a net gain on claims and objections of 468 for the Liberals. Their predominance may, perhaps, be explained partly by the fact that a new Conservative Association secretary, Thomas Musgrove, had succeeded William Gregory and he was conducting his first municipal revision. The most significant contest in 1862, took place in the North West ward where, in an acrimonious struggle, David Newton failed to retain his seat. J.J. Flitch, the successful candidate, was a Liberal teetotaller who sat on the Board of Guardians and, like George Tatham, was in the leather business.[44]

In Mill Hill two Conservatives were returned by acclamation but in the North East ward the Conservatives withdrew their candidate in order to throw their support behind one of the two Liberals. The party made an overall gain of one seat on council and the radical Leeds Express congratulated the Conservatives on the return of William Middleton in Kirkgate and Thomas Eagland in Mill Hill, both of whom, said the newspaper, had proved themselves useful and sensible members of council during previous terms in office.[46] In spite of a lively campaign in Holbeck, where the Conservatives attempted to link Councillor Carter to mismanagement of the Crown Point manure depôt by virtue of his chairmanship of the nuisance committee, both Carter and the other Liberal candidate were returned. Conservative tactics in the campaign had been based on an attempt to get Liberals to split their votes between the Conservative candidate and the other Liberal. Carter, together with Edmund Stead the defeated Liberal incumbent in Kirkgate were elected aldermen at the meeting of town council held on 10 November 1862. Evidently, the aldermanic bench was used in that year to provide a refuge for those who had failed to gain re-election or who had been subject to an intense campaign from the opposition.

On 30 March 1863, the matter of an increase in the borough treasurer's salary was again a subject for discussion at ward meetings held in the West, Kirkgate and Hunslet wards. Alderman Carter attended the West ward meeting and declared his support for the salary increase on the basis of additional work performed by the treasurer. Francis Ferns spoke out forcefully in favour of an increase the next day at a council meeting and his colleague Councillor Wheelhouse also supported the increase but Council deferred a decision until a list of the borough treasurer's duties was provided. The 'pressure from without', however, continued unabated and the salary increase was condemned in Armley on 9 April and at a stormy meeting held in Bramley held one week later.[47]

Before the council committee which was investigating Hepper's increase had made its report Francis Ferns suddenly reversed his position on the issue. It was suggested that some of his constituents had reminded him that his term of office expired in November 1863 and that he "may possibly seek re-election".[48] Councillor Wheelhouse received a similar warning at a Mill Hill ward meeting on 8 June when he was told that if he did not attend more to the deliberation of his constituents he would not again be put in nomination for the ward".[49] Neither of the Conservative councillors participated in the discussion of the borough treasurer's duties at the town council meeting of 24 June.

On 10 June, an attempt was made by some of the Leeds Guardians to raise the salary of their clerk but a majority voted to delay a decision until appropriate enquiries had been made. Meetings were held on 15 June in the West, Kirkgate and North wards and in the Mill Hill and North West wards on the following evening. Needless to say the resolutions passed at the meetings were all opposed to an increase in the clerk's salary. The Leeds Intelligencer claimed that the meetings had been called by the Liberals but when the vote on the £50 salary increase was taken at the Guardian's meeting of 17 June, four of the five who were opposed to the increase were Conservatives.[50]

While the attention of the ratepayers was fixed on the salary proposals for the borough treasurer and the clerk to the Guardians, the Leeds Overseers increased the salary of Christopher Heaps, the assistant overseer, by £100 to raise his annual salary to £300! No ward meetings were held in opposition because the matter was a *fait accompli*. William Hepper was not granted his increase but was relieved of some of his duties and a chief clerk was appointed to the treasury at a salary of £100 per annum. Henry Lampen, the clerk to the Guardians, received his increase only because it would cease when his additional duties connected with the Diseases Prevention Act ended.

There is no doubt that the series of ward meetings had an impact on the town council and the Board of Guardians and it is clear that they had the effect of changing the position taken by Ferns and Wheelhouse. Yet the Leeds Express noted that the abuse which had been directed towards Hepper at the ward meetings in 1862 had served to force "men in authority" to seek other means to raise the salaries of public servants. Hepper's second application for an increase, for example, was passed by the finance committee only two days before it was introduced in Council - a tactic that was adopted by the "men in authority" to prevent the "dreaded ward meetings". Lampen's increase was recommended, almost as an afterthought, at the end of a long report on the sanitary state of the town. In turn, the actions of the "men in authority" had led to more ward meetings. On balance, however, the newspaper felt that the tactics used by those "in authority" posed a greater danger to municipal government than the "disease" of ward meetings. It appealed to ratepayers to show confidence in the ability of their representatives to deal with questions of salary increases intimating, of course, that those who had been elected would then not have to indulge in surreptitious practices![51]

It is clear that during this period perceptions of party were becoming blurred and it is too simplistic to judge that the ward meetings were only called by the Conservatives to oppose a Liberal council or by the Liberals to oppose a Board of Guardians which was controlled by the Conservatives. The initial support given by Ferns and Wheelhouse to the treasurer's salary increase obviously caused confusion among Conservatives. It probably seemed that the stalemate, or consensus, arrived at in parliamentary politics was filtering down to the municipal parliament. Some Leeds Conservatives were not prepared to accept that and the Leeds Express suggested that the reason for Joseph Wright's failure to be re-elected in 1862 was because the Conservatives had deemed him to be "too independent".[52]

Although the Liberals made a net gain on claims and objections of one hundred voters at the 1863 municipal revision, there was a notable Conservative gain of 113 voters in the working class North East ward. A committee of the Working Men's Conservative Association was credited with the success and it is not surprising that it should have been active there since E.W. Batley, secretary of the WMCA lived in the ward.[53] Unfortunately, the Association's efforts were to no avail because it was not possible to attract a candidate and so the Liberal incumbent was returned.[54]

In Mill Hill, Wheelhouse decided not to seek re-election - the Leeds Express claimed that he had been "thrown overboard" - and in Headingley Francis Ferns was defeated by William Glover Joy, a Liberal candidate; a clear sign of the displeasure of Conservatives in a seat which was considered "safe" for their party.[55] On the other hand Joseph Wright, with the support of "influential members of all parties", contested the West ward successfully and was labelled a Liberal-Conservative by the Liberal press.[56] The Leeds Intelligencer labelled him an Independent prior to the election but, of course, designated him "Conservative" after his victory.[57]

Although the Conservatives had candidates in only five wards they had an overall gain of four seats on council increasing their total to twelve.[58] An upset victory in Bramley, where the Liberals had held all the seats during the preceding six years, contributed to their gain. A combination of inclement weather and the size of the ward had made it necessary to provide cabs before voters could be induced to go to the poll. A further inducement for those who voted for the Conservative candidates was a "six-penny ticket" which could be exchanged for its value in liquor at any public house in Bramley.[59] The Conservative victory, however, might not have been owed entirely to the influence of the beer barrel for there had also been a split in the Liberal ranks in the ward. At the nomination meeting for Liberal candidates an amendment opposing the re-nomination of a Liberal incumbent was seconded by William Ellis, former chairman of the Armley Reform Association. Evidently, Ellis must have believed that reform was needed within the Liberal party in Bramley. Ironically, the Reform Association which he had helped to establish, sought an extension of the parliamentary franchise for those who had proved themselves susceptible to Conservative bribery in Bramley. At any event, a united Liberal party in the ward in 1863 would, presumably, have been in a better position to lead their supporters away from temptation![60] The major focus of the election in Bramley seemed far divorced from the question of effecting greater economy in the disposal of sewerage which was the issue upon which Conservatives and Liberals were ostensibly fighting the 1863 municipal election.[61]

The Leeds Express congratulated the Conservative party for its successes in 1863 and the following year the newspaper announced that it would continue to support the candidates of that party who were "scrupulous in their conduct, moral in their habits, and holding good repute among their fellow burgesses". It drew attention to the calibre of some unnamed councillors by noting that the Liberal cause was injured by "those who profess Liberal views . . . (but) whose every-day life is a bye-word amongst their fellows and whose pot-housing is notorious".[62] The Leeds Mercury expressed concern about the lack of consideration which Leeds municipal bodies received from "thoughtful" men. It drew attention to a minority of councillors "whose coarseness, unreasonableness or gross immorality, . . . (brought) an undeserved slur on the general body". In what was clearly a mellowing of its position from editorials in previous years the Whig journal conceded that it was more important for the council to be "filled with good men, rather than with good Liberals or good Conservatives".[63]

The statements in the Liberal press were certainly indicative of the co-operation between parties in the election of Joy and Wright in 1863 and both parties combined their efforts again the following year to prevent the election of Francis Ferns in Headingley. In Mill Hill, a rumour was circulated prior to the election that a Liberal and a Conservative would be returned although two representatives from each party sought election. The rumour was an accurate prediction as Henry Price, the incumbent Conservative surgeon, and Henry Dixon, a Liberal who had served on council before, were returned. Robert Adams failed to secure a seat despite strong support from the Leeds Mercury. He had been a leading member of the Reform Registration Association for many years but he had also become involved with the Leeds Working Men's Parliamentary Reform Association. Adams' failure may, perhaps, be attributed partly to his links with the LWMPRA for in Mill Hill, the wealthiest ward in the borough, such a connection would have been least likely to have been in his favour.

The Working Men's Conservative Association was active in three wards and in two of them, North East and Holbeck, Conservatives were elected. Full credit for the victories was attributed to the Association by the Leeds Intelligencer but the Liberal press ascribed the defeat of their candidate in the North East ward to a combination of corruption and the influence of Father O'Kelly, a Catholic priest who was accused of having led Roman Catholic voters to the poll to vote for Benjamin Idle, the Conservative candidate.[64] Holbeck provided the election result which caused the greatest surprise where Dr. Dobson, one of the Liberal incumbents, added to his unpopularity with Liberal electors by declaring his opposition to a £5 franchise. John Swales, the Conservative corn miller, who declared that he favoured a "large" extension of the franchise was elected at the head of the poll. The Conservatives waged a skillful campaign in Holbeck because R.W. Moore, a Guardian who had originally been nominated as the Conservative candidate in the ward, was withdrawn after he declared that the extension of the franchise had nothing to do with council matters. While Moore may have been correct technically those who were responsible for masterminding the Conservative campaign recognised that the question of franchise reform was very significant to the electors in Holbeck and other wards. In fact, questions on the extension of the franchise were asked at approximately half the ward meetings.

Despite the use of shilling tickets for "soup" and the six-penny beer tickets, which had gained notoriety in the previous year's election, the Conservatives in Bramley were unable to repeat the success of 1863. Voter participation in the election was noted as being the best that the ward had witnessed for many years. Liberal honour was restored as that party retained both seats and the chairman of the election committee asserted that "not one penny . . . had been spent in beer to get the vote of any man".[65]

Overall, ten Liberals and six Conservatives were returned in the 1864 municipal elections with a net gain of three seats on council for the Conservatives. It is clear that while both parties might combine to re-elect worthy individuals, such as Henry Price, or to deny election to those deemed unworthy of election, like Francis Ferns, such activities were taking place in wards which were predominantly middle class. In other wards the political battle waged on and the Leeds Mercury reported that the 1864 municipal elections had excited a great deal of interest.[66] In the notoriously venal ward of Kirkgate "interest" was enhanced for the cause of incumbent Councillor William Wray by breakfasts, dinners, and beer and it was recorded that the Conservative councillor had bought between 180 and 200 votes in that way.[67] Kirkgate was a small ward and its electors were predominantly small shopkeepers and common lodging house keepers who proved to be very receptive to inducements made through the medium of public houses.[68]

Wray became one of the central figures in a bribery scandal connected with a municipal bye-election in the East ward on 28 November 1864. Evidence was produced that votes for the Conservative candidate had been purchased at four shillings each.[69] The Leeds Mercury was, perhaps, more alarmed by the events in the East ward than in Kirkgate because it had a predominantly working class electorate. As usual, the editors warned that the working man who sold his vote at municipal elections was "doing his best to postpone the day when he might vote for a member of Parliament, and to deprive his fellow workers of that privilege".[70] The activities in Bramley in the previous year and the events in the East ward in 1864 did not help Edward Baines' efforts to extend the franchise.

Seth Joy, the Conservative auctioneer, and William Wray were convicted of bribery on 10 February 1865, and incurred the statutory penalty of a forty shilling fine and the costs of the prosecution.[71]

The Liberals withdrew charges against twenty others. It was expected that Wray would be required to resign his seat on the Board of Guardians and his position on town council since conviction under the Act appeared to prevent an individual from holding any office for six years. Wray did not resign and on 21 April the Court of Queen's Bench refused to grant an order for a quo warranto judging that Wray would have to be convicted on a criminal prosecution if he were to be legally disqualified from office. The matter was not pursued and an explanation was provided four years later by Councillor Edwin Gaunt during evidence he presented to a Select Committee of the House of Commons that was established to consider bribery and corruption at parliamentary and municipal elections. Gaunt revealed that seven or eight individuals had shared the £200 expense incurred in the prosecution of the cases in the civil court but they were not prepared to incur further expense especially since none of those who paid the bill were connected with the East ward![72]

In fact, even when Wray and Joy were convicted the Liberal press was unable to proclaim an absolute victory because it was evident that East ward Liberals were also sullied. The Leeds Express expected that a counter summons by the Conservatives would "bring forth some ugly facts which we would fain smother".[73] Seven convictions, including one against the Liberal ward secretary, were obtained by the Conservatives at the Leeds county court on 6 March. Both parties were clearly involved in the East ward bribery and the Leeds Mercury concluded:

> If either of the great political parties in this borough has yet left in it a particle of self-respect . . . if they are not banded together in a disgraceful conspiracy to debauch the character of the working classes . . . each will render hearty thanks to its opponent for unmasking the corruption which lurks and works unknown to the honourable men on both sides, in the lowest substratum of party managers and electioneering busybodies.[74]

However, the newspaper detracted from its theme somewhat when it suggested that the offence was "of the worst dye" because the offences had been carried out when no great principle of national importance was at stake! Nevertheless, it believed that those who had been involved on the Liberal side should be expelled from the party.[75] For its part the Leeds Intelligencer condemned the bribery but, quite correctly, suggested that it was mere sophistry to plead extenuating circumstances in the case of bribery carried out in the cause of "immense interests". The Conservative journal preferred to see the "Whig-Radical monopoly of the Aldermanic Bench . . . extend to the whole council chamber, than that the election of a Conservative should be secured by such means".[76]

At a regular quarterly meeting of town council on 10 May 1865, a motion to petition Parliament for an amendment of the 1859 Municipal Corporations Act was passed *nemine contradiscente*. During the course of the discussion it was asserted that nearly one half of the councillors had obtained their seats by dishonourable means. No-one denied the statement and the Mercury declared that the situation showed "a moral condition of which a community of Hottentots might be ashamed". Bribery, it confessed, was the "regularly organized means of warfare used by the two great parties in the town" and concluded that a very large number of people must have participated actively. While it noted that the confession had been made by a Conservative councillor the newspaper conveniently forgot to remind its readers that the Conservatives had last had a majority of councillors in 1841 and that for half of the succeeding twenty-four years the Conservatives had held less than a quarter of the seats. The Leeds Mercury realised that it was

> exceedingly difficult to make rules for the regulation of any kind of warfare . . . expecially . . . in the case of a political contest . . . (where there were) so many opportunities for underground operations, so many temptations to try to steal a march upon the enemy.77

By the mid 1860's, Leeds municipal politics present two equally valid images. Political warfare was still evident in some wards which had high concentrations of working class and lower middle class voters. In other wards the Liberals and Conservatives sometimes found it possible to unite in support of the "best" candidate and party labels meant less. There were, however, limits to the extent which party barriers could be lowered - as Councillors Ferns and Wheelhouse discovered on the salary issue.

V

It would be an understatement to suggest that Edward Baines wished to fulfill his election pledge on the £6 franchise for he clung as tenaciously to that issue as he had done to the principle of voluntary education. After the failure of the Russell Reform Bill in June 1860, and the subsequent lack of Government action on the matter, Baines felt compelled to introduce legislation for a limited measure of parliamentary reform one year later.

In March 1861, Henry Brand, the Liberal Whip, warned Baines that while many Liberal MP's would favour a "well-considered and complete measure" of reform there would be "a large falling off" with respect to Baines' proposal. He repeated advice in his letter which he had already given Baines "frankly in conversation" reminding him that he would be taking a wiser course by withdrawing the bill. Baines' draft reply provides some insight into the reason for his stubbornness on matters of principle. He was, he wrote, "pledged to the Bill and could not retreat without loss of character". The Leeds Liberal MP also asserted that there was much "unfounded prejudice" against the £6 franchise and that the lull in public feeling on the issue was passing away. He reminded Brand that he had not blamed the Government for its failure to introduce a reform bill in 1861 and that his own proposal, which was copied from the Government measure, was being brought forward in order to unite the Liberals. He cautioned that if nothing was done, and the Government changed, the Liberals would be charged with a desertion of their principles and a general election would leave the party in a minority. He concluded:

> Knowing as I do the earnest convictions of the rank and file of the party in the towns on this question (in spite of temporary want of excitement), I see no safety for the Liberal party but in our leaders retaining their hold upon the right to the Reform question by giving sincere support to independent members in honest attempts to advance the cause in Parliament.78

The "lull in public feeling" and the "temporary want of excitement" in the country was a problem for Baines, although he was able to overcome it in Leeds to some extent. As the Leeds Mercury pointed out, the indifference was the result of "wide-spread commercial prosperity which disinclines all people to turn away from their ledgers".[79] Leeds itself was a good example of the prevailing economic climate. In June 1860, Christopher Heaps, the Leeds assistant overseer, gave evidence before the House of Lords select committee on the Elective Franchise in Counties and Boroughs and remarked that very few able bodied men in Leeds had been out of employment during the previous ten years.[80]

A public meeting had been held in the town on 13 March 1860, to discuss the merits of Russell's Reform Bill. Elijah Rawlinson, a tailor, had felt that the proposal was acceptable "on the whole" since the people of the large towns and boroughs had been apathetic and indifferent to reform. David Green, the radical bookseller, reaffirmed his belief in universal suffrage but, rather ambivalently, advised working men to let the bill pass and "speak when they got the power to speak". However, Councillor Carter, with support from John Shaw, attempted to move an amendment. They regretted that the measure would exclude large numbers of working men; provided inadequately for the representation of populous districts; omitted the protection of the ballot; and retained the objectionable rate paying clauses of the last Reform Bill. When the votes on the Carter amendment and the resolution to support Russell's bill were taken, the mayor declared the former to be lost and the latter carried. The reporter for the Leeds Intelligencer felt that there had not been a great difference in the number of hands raised on both occasions. In the opinion of the Leeds Times the meeting had erred on the side of timidity by not supporting the amendment and even the Leeds Mercury concluded that it could not regret that Carter's amendment had been moved since it showed that the people were not so dead and indifferent as they had been represented.[81] After the bill had failed the Leeds Express dubbed the reform meeting "an utter sham" at which the appointed speakers had "not expressed their honest thoughts as to the claims of the people".[82]

In 1861, it was clearly incumbent upon Baines to show Parliament that there was pressure from without and to show the working classes that parliamentary reform was not merely idle election rhetoric. He accomplished both tasks by not only encouraging the development of the Leeds Working Men's Parliamentary Reform Association but also by making it an adjunct to his own aims. R.M. Lowerson has suggested that Baines did little to alter the indifference of which he complained either in person or through his newspaper.[83] His suggestion does not seem to be in accord with the fact that the LWMPRA was dominated by the Liberals (with which he agrees) or the numerous exhortations of the Leeds Mercury to working men encouraging them to maintain pressure from without. While Lowerson is correct that Baines kept in the background with respect to the day-to-day activities of the LWMPRA, it is suggested in this study that he exercised whatever control he wished by virtue of the fact that Elihu Finnie and William Hickes, compositors at the Leeds Mercury, held the key offices of president and secretary of the Association.

The constitution of the LWMPRA was adopted at a meeting held on 17 July 1860, at the Alliance Hotel and the meeting was adjourned for two weeks to allow time for the selection of two "eligible working men" from each of the twelve wards of the borough to act as representatives on the executive. According to the press release issued after the meeting, the movement to establish the Association had originated with a few working men in response to the "disparaging terms in which their class . . . has been spoken of in recent debates in the House of Commons". Their organization, it was asserted, would allow them to show their determination to secure a full and fair share of elective power by an orderly, continued and constitutional agitation.[84]

Two weeks later the Association decided to begin making preparations for a "Working Men's Demonstration" on the subject of parliamentary reform which it hoped to arrange for October. The first report in which the names of those involved in the LWMPRA were published appeared in the press on 18 August when Elijah Rawlinson was identified as a vice-president - the only member to be named who belonged to the executive committee. It was resolved that a series of ward meetings would be held in order to bring the formation and objects of the Association "more promptly and distinctly before the working men of this town".[86] It was claimed that approximately forty new members had been enrolled at the meeting but obviously the resolution which had been passed suggests that the rate at which new members were being attracted was considered unsatisfactory.

On 22 August 1860, a leaflet was issued which was addressed to "The Working Men of Leeds" and which listed the officers of the Association. In addition to Finnie, Rawlinson, and Hickes, were John Geves, formerly involved with the Leeds Beersellers' Protection Association but by 1860 a clerk, named as one of the vice-presidents, John Armitage, a warehouseman in 1857 but a grocer by 1866, as finance secretary, and Robert Buttle whose occupation cannot be determined, as treasurer. The membership fee was set at not less than one shilling annually and the first object of the Association was an extension of the suffrage to include every male who occupied a tenement which was rated, or was liable to be rated, for the relief of the poor. The ballot, redistribution of members and a shorter duration of parliaments were the other three objects of the Association.[87] Obviously the organizers were seeking reform which was more extensive than Baines' franchise reform proposal but the aims of the Association were modified to suit his goal. The LWMPRA did not waver in its support for his approach until after his third attempt at reform legislation had failed and the hostile attitude of some Liberal electors to an extension of the franchise became clear in the parliamentary election campaign of 1865.

The first meeting was held in Holbeck and it is not surprising that the LWMPRA should become active there first because the ward already boasted an organization called the Holbeck Manhood Suffrage Association. Although John Roberts, the president of the Suffrage Association, was not mentioned in the press reports of the meeting, his active support was probably not necessary for success since Councillor Carter not only chaired the gathering but also expressed his warm sympathy with the objectives of the LWMPRA.[88] It is also unlikely that conflict would have existed between the two groups for another reason. On 17 January 1860, the Suffrage Association had sponsored a meeting at which Ernest Jones, a former leader in the Chartist movement, had urged the members of the audience to reject all instalments of reform and pledge themselves only to support manhood suffrage. Working men condemned Jones' approach and in response to the opposition he "waxed very intolerant and rancorous" lashing himself "into a furious passion". The reporter from the Leeds Times concluded that the violence of his speech deterred "even those advanced Liberals" who would have otherwise supported Jones' view from taking any action in the matter.[89]

Apparently the audience at the West ward meeting of 13 September was not large, with only twenty new members being enrolled, but it was incidentally mentioned that John Bright would probably be at a large meeting which was expected to take place in November.[90] Planning for the meeting had been underway prior to 3 September when William Hickes had written to invite Edward Baines to attend. Evidently the committee had already received four letters from Bright but he had declined to fix a date for the meeting before October. Hickes recorded that the Association had enrolled nearly two hundred members and noted that it had been achieved "in the course of a few weeks, in a very quite (sic) way, without much parade, or being backed by any influential aid from the classes above". However, he pointed out that while it was hoped that the working men would meet all the expenses of the meeting, the Association would be thankful for aid from others "and be glad to enrol such gentlemen as yourself as honorary members"[91]

Ward meetings followed in Hunslet on 20 September and in the East ward one week later. In October, meetings took place in the North East ward, at which 150 were present and in the North West ward where an audience of fifty was recorded. The final ward meeting was held in Wortley on 22 November where, it was claimed, "many members" were added to the Association.[92]

In a letter to the editors of the Liberal press in late November, William Hickes called for parliamentary reform in gradual steps and pointed to the need "to accept that which is moderate and feasible now". He suggested that reform was needed to right the injustice of excluding so large a number of "the best portion of the working class" from the franchise; that Parliament was pledged to reform; and that "quiet at home and peace abroad" made it an appropriate time to proceed with it. Without an early settlement confidence in Liberal leaders would be shaken.[93] William Hickes' comments were certainly in tune with those of his employer the Liberal MP for Leeds!

The Leeds Mercury called on "all honest Liberals" to support the working classes in their movement to secure an extension of the franchise. With respect to the borough meeting on parliamentary reform which had been arranged for 11 December 1860, it reported:

> We have received satisfactory assurances that the resolutions to be moved . . . will be of a temperate and prudent character . . .. The working men who have taken the leading part in the movement appear to us to be sincere and earnest, but at the same time moderate.[94]

The parliamentary reform meeting was used by the LWMPRA to "inaugurate" itself. Admission to non-members was by ticket and in spite of prices of one shilling for a reserved seat and sixpence for a place on the promenade there was a crowd of approximately 2,500 in the Victoria Hall. The Leeds Mercury claimed that the crowd was composed chiefly of the working classes while the Conservative journal insisted that only about one-third of those present were working class. The Intelligencer suggested that many had attended the meeting merely from curiosity to "hear the harangue" of John Bright and that a sprinkling of well-known Conservatives were present.[95] E.A. Leatham the MP for Huddersfield and Edward Baines spoke at the meeting with the latter giving his approval to the formation of the LWMPRA. The Liberal press, of course, concluded that the meeting had been a great success but the Leeds Mercury warned the working class that it would have to be followed up with other action or it would have been better if the Association had never been formed.[96]

On the afternoon of 21 February 1861, many of the most active Liberals attended a meeting of the Leeds Reform Registration Society in order to consider the steps which should be taken with respect to Edward Baines' Franchise Bill. In the evening the executive committee of the LWMPRA met and they, like the Registration Society, strongly approved of the measure.[97] A public meeting was held on 1 March to rally support for the bill and it was clearly a joint effort by both groups. Four resolutions were proposed by members of the Registration Society and three of them were seconded by members of the LWMPRA. It is not clear how much of the activity in the wards to obtain signatures for petitions in support of the Franchise Bill was the result of the efforts of the LWMPRA. In a letter to Elihu Finnie after the bill's defeat Edward Baines thanked the Association for the petitions which it forwarded but he also noted that others were received from Leeds.[99]

In his report to the first annual meeting of the Association, in September 1861, William Hickes stated that the LWMPRA had co-operated with the Registration Society both at the public meeting and in promoting the petitions in the wards. During its first year the LWMPRA had established connections with four similar Associations in London and one in each of Rotheram and Liverpool. Among those who were elected as member's of the Association's committee for 1861-62 were Councillors R.M. Carter, J.W. Smith and E. Gaunt. It was also resolved to hold a conference of reformers in Leeds.[100]

Approximately two hundred delegates, predominantly from Yorkshire and Lancashire, attended the two-day conference which opened on 18

November 1861. On the first day William Hickes warned that while several persons had expressed an opinion that the conference should propound a scheme of extensive parliamentary reform, the objective of the LWMPRA in calling the conference was simply to ventilate the reform question and to leave the scheme of reform to their representatives in Parliament. Nevertheless, delegates from Manchester, Birmingham and Hull spoke out vigorously for extensive reform. Edward Baines expressed the opinion that the day for passing a comprehensive measure had passed away. He was added to the business committee which was instructed to prepare a definite proposition on reform for the consideration of the Conference on the final day.

Not surprisingly, Councillor Carter saw the hand of Baines in the resolutions which were presented to the delegates on 19 November. In the key area of the extension of the franchise, the business committee recommended that the Conference "claim such an extension of the franchise . . . as will give to the working classes a fair, honest and effectual representation". Carter warned that they could not expect the support of the working classes for a "milk and water" resolution. He suggested, significantly, that working men in Leeds and other large towns did not attend reform meetings because they had been disappointed so often. It would be reported, he declared, that Baines was only interested in conferring votes on such classes as publicans, shopkeepers and bookkeepers. Baines reminded Carter that four thousand of the five thousand working men in Holbeck, the ward which Carter represented on town council, had signed the petition in favour of his Franchise Bill. Baines appears to have exercised great control in terms of the resolutions which were presented by the business committee and he also acted as chairman during the public meeting which closed the conference on the second evening.[101]

One of the resolutions which was passed at the reform conference called for a national conference of reformers to be held in London and the LWMPRA met on 10 February 1862 to select their delegates. The six-man delegation included Elihu Finnie, as might be expected, but also Robert Adams, the stockbroker who had played a leading role in the Reform Registration Society for many years. Benjamin Naylor, another delegate, was a woollen cloth manufacturer and merchant and the committee of delegates was authorized to appoint "other gentlemen from the middle classes" if they wished. Although John Geves seconded the nomination of the committee members, he "urged the necessity of working men mainly moving in the matter, so that it should not be said that it was a middle class movement".[102]

At the annual meeting of the LWMPRA held on 13 October 1862, Robert Adams acted as chairman and it is possible that he held the office of president for the 1862-63 year. During the course of the meeting it was reported that the working classes had not been as energetic with respect to the franchise question as they should have been. In his closing remarks Robert Adams urged that attention be paid to the register of parliamentary electors. He might well have been presiding at a meeting of the Reform Registration Society![103] If the columns of the Leeds press are an accurate indicator, the LWMPRA appears to have been dormant during the year 1862-63.

In his third annual report to the Association at its meeting of 14 December 1863, William Hickes explained that the fact that no measure of reform could be expected from the Government "had induced the Association not to waste its energies in futile attempts while . . . (that situation) existed". In addition, the civil war in the United States and the consequent distress in Lancashire had checked discussion of reform. Elihu Finnie was restored to the presidency for 1863-64, and a resolution was passed which expressed regret at the Government's inactivity on the reform question.[104]

Edward Baines, obviously using the LWMPRA as his springboard, converted the Association's resolution of "regret" into a call for an effective measure of reform. In an open letter of nearly two and one half columns which was published on 2 January 1863, Baines reconfirmed his belief that reform should be effected "whilst the tide is low, not when it is at the flood" and that it should be accomplished one point at a time.[105] J.K. Rowbotham, a yarn merchant who had been appointed corresponding secretary of the LWMPRA at the annual meeting, responded and, not surprisingly, confirmed that the executive committee, like Baines, believed it necessary to obtain one reform at a time. The committee wished to leave Baines "as free as possible" but suggested that he reintroduce his Franchise Bill if the Government would not do it.[106] In a second open letter, published on 16 January, Baines confessed that he found the secretary's arguments "sound and unanswerable" and the spirit of the letter "temperate and patriotic". While he deferred pledging himself on a franchise bill he promised to consult Locke King, the MP who had traditionally introduced a bill for the reform of the county franchise. His "humble advice" to the people was that they should "speak" and give a clear expression of the public will.[107]

Baines was, in fact, carrying on a charade for his correspondence shows that he had already drafted a letter to Locke King on 28 December 1863, in which he raised the matter of the franchise. In the letter he reiterated his concern that at the next election the Liberals would be charged with a violation of their pledges. He felt that the part played by the two of them in the attempt at franchise reform in 1861 left a "new and serious responsibility" resting on them. Others were inactive either because they deferred to Locke King and himself or because they used inaction on the part of the two franchise reformers as an excuse to do nothing. Baines confessed that his own sense of responsibility in the matter made him uneasy.[108] The Leeds Liberal MP presents a strange figure to posterity by his manipulation of the LWMPRA to ask him to reintroduce his franchise bill, and his assertion that he would not pledge himself to it while at the same time clearly feeling a strong sense of responsibility to ensure its reintroduction!

By the end of January 1864, the LWMPRA announced that the committee met every Thursday evening at Parker's Temperance Hotel to enrol new members and transact business. The Association dutifully arranged a reform conference, which was held on 22 February, in order to consider the steps to be taken with respect to the franchise bills introduced by Locke King and Baines. While it was resolved that petitions and public meetings should be arranged in support of the bills, the comments at the conference confirmed Baines' analysis of the disgust felt towards a large number of Liberal MP's. Yet, in spite of the activity, the Leeds Mercury was not sanguine that the "rekindling of such a spirit among the people" would carry reform, but it concluded that the people could "galvanize a certain sense of reforming energy

. . . to carry sound and true hearted reformers at the next election".[110] Perhaps Edward Baines was preparing well in advance for his own contest at the hustings because, as the Leeds Times noted, there was "a consciousness present that the present Parliament . . . (was) drawing near its end".[111]

After a timely reminder from the Leeds Mercury that only an interval of seven weeks would separate the first and second readings of the Franchise Bill a series of ward meetings were held during March in the Armley, Wortley, Mill Hill and West wards.[112] At the Mill Hill meeting of 24 March, William Hickes said that he had hoped to see some members of the newly formed Working Men's Conservative Association amongst them![113] In April, meetings held in the North West and North East wards attracted approximately three dozen and sixty people respectively. As the Leeds Intelligencer pointed out, Baines' bill was single-barrelled but its petitioners constituted themselves a revolver of many chambers.[114]

The series of ward meetings were the prelude to a general meeting held on 13 April. Elihu Finnie, Elijah Rawlinson, and John Geves spoke on behalf of Baines' bill and opposition to it came from E.W. Batley, secretary of the Conservative Working Men's Association. He did not object to reform in general, for he supported the proposals made in Disraeli's 1859 Reform Bill, but rather to Baines' proposal for a general reduction of the franchise which he believed, quite correctly, was the "thin end of the wedge". In spite of the predominant role played at the meeting by the leaders in the working class organizations, it had been called as a town meeting and it might have been expected that members of the Liberal hierarchy would be present. Of the eighteen magistrates who had been placed on the bench because they were Liberal, only the mayor and another alderman were present. Similarly thirty of the thirty-five Liberal councillors were absent and none of the absentees had sent notes of apology.[115] Their absence is an indication that in April 1864 they were not even prepared to pay lip service to the idea of co-operation between the middle and working classes.[116] It is clear that there was a split between an important group of Liberal electors and other members of the 'party of all shades' at least one year before the parliamentary election of 1865.

In January 1865, it became evident that the LWMPRA did not have exclusive claim to spearhead the parliamentary reform movement in the borough. The Bramley Reform Association was inaugurated on 4 January with Edward Baines as the guest speaker. According to Councillor Addyman, who chaired the meeting, the Association owed its origin, in part, to the defeat of the Liberals in that ward at the municipal election of 1863. This serves as a reminder of the link which was perceived between political events at both municipal and parliamentary levels. Nevertheless, it was a strange turn of events for Edward Baines to be addressing an Association formed because of the bribery to which working class electors had succumbed, while he preached an extension of the parliamentary franchise to members of the same group![117] A reform association was also formed in Holbeck on 21 January and it also took on responsibilities for safeguarding the register of parliamentary electors in the ward.[118] Members of the LWMPRA were not mentioned at either of the meetings to establish the new reform groups.

The LWMPRA was, however, actively soliciting signatures for a requisition to hold another town meeting on the question of reform.[119]

It had invited Viscount Amberley, eldest son of Lord John Russell, to be present on 31 January 1865. Although the LWMPRA may have been credited with the intiative for the invitation, it was Darnton Lupton, a moderate Liberal, who met Amberley at the station. Lupton, with a forthrightness becoming a Yorkshireman, made it clear to the Viscount that he favoured a £6 franchise "but no further".[120] In effect, the invitation had been made to determine whether or not Amberley should be selected to partner Baines as a candidate in the parliamentary election. Both they and W.E. Forster made speeches. It is inconceivable that Baines would not have agreed to the approach to Amberley. In the first place it did no harm to run in harness with someone whose father was so closely connected both with the passage of the Reform Act of 1832 and subsequent proposals for parliamentary reform. Secondly, Baines perhaps regretted his criticism of Russell at a speech on 8 December 1864, when he had accused him of being "a little disposed to 'rest and be thankful'".[121] Baines had recently been giving vigorous support to Gladstone and his acceptance of Amberley would help to retain links to the Russell group, whose support he would require if he hoped to get his Franchise Bill passed. Furthermore, while Amberley was considered to be a radical he was, at twenty-three years of age, a neophyte in politics and he would be more likely to seek advice from the Leeds Liberal MP than to try to challenge him for leadership of Leeds Liberals. At all events the Leeds Times credited the LWMPRA for the "magnificent demonstration" but Elihu Finnie was the only member of the executive who was named in the list of local luminaries present at the meeting.[122]

On 3 May 1865, Edward Baines made a third, and final, attempt to carry his Franchise Bill. It was defeated by 288 votes to 214 votes five days later and on 17 May the LWMPRA held the first of a series of open air reform meetings which were organized to allow participants the opportunity to vent their discontent both with the lack of progress on the extension of the franchise and with the hostility of some Leeds Liberal electors to its extension. Unlike previous meetings at which members of the central committee had supported Baines' £6 instalment, the four meetings which were sponsored in the weeks prior to the 1865 parliamentary election are noteworthy for their emphasis on manhood suffrage. Elihu Finnie, who had been involved in the canvass for Baines and Amberley, had been " surprised to meet with a determined oppostion to the £6 franchise from persons who had themselves just got out of the ranks of the working classes". Whilst they were indebted to Mr. Baines for his efforts, even his "small measure" had been met with "the most determined hostility". Finnie called for a more comprehensive measure of reform. Archibald Scarr, a fruiterer, Mr. Newman, who was identified by the Intelligencer as an "active electioneering agent for the Liberals", and even the moderate Elijah Rawlinson, were all members of the LWMPRA executive who added their voices to the call for more extensive franchise reform than that which had been proposed by Baines.[123]

The second meeting was held in Holbeck and it gave Alderman Carter his usual opportunity to explain that he had consented to support a smaller measure of reform in deference to "Mr. Baines and others who were called the leaders of the party" so that all parties might unite. He was convinced by then that the working classes could gain nothing by seeking a compromise with the middle classes and he, too, regretted that so large a proportion of the middle class electors were using their influence in opposition to any further extension of the franchise.[124]

When the fourth meeting of the series was held on 21 June, Archibald Scarr declared that it was the duty of the Liberal party to use every effort to secure the return of their two candidates. His remark is an indication that, once again, the Liberals in Leeds were disunited. A resolution was passed which condemned the "unjust and intolerable" exclusion of the working classes from the electoral franchise and bound those at the meeting to use every effort to obtain their "inalienable rights as citizens of a free country".[125] It is obvious that in addition to the development of any frustration which the repeated rebuttal of Baines' Franchise Bill may have caused, the members of the LWMPRA were angry at the lack of support for their cause from Leeds Liberal electors. The change in attitude of the LWMPRA probably did not harm Baines in the sense that working class electors who supported the Association would only form a small proportion of the constituency. However, his earlier support from the group and its involvement in the selection of Amberley were links which might well have caused some middle class Liberal voters to desert the party in the parliamentary election of 1865.

VI

The Working Men's Conservative Association was founded on 17 November 1862, by a group of six people. In spite of the delivery of circulars on several occasions to approximately sixty or seventy individuals, interest in the Association remained low but did not deter the enthusiasm of the dozen who attended the monthly meetings. Each member was provided with a book in which he noted the names of those Conservatives who were entitled to vote but were not on the burgess roll, and in which changes of residence of Conservative voters were also recorded.[126]

The Association concentrated its activities on the North East ward and after one year's work a net gain of 113 Conservatives was made on the register.[127] Although a lack of manpower was undoubtedly the reason for the confinement of activity to one ward, the concentrated effort produced success in an area which appeared to have become a stronghold of the Liberals. It is interesting to compare its limited aim of ensuring the registration of working men who were eligible for the municipal franchise with the more wide-reaching aspirations of the LWMPRA. In addition, the LWMPRA had a membership of two hundred soon after its formation and probably could not provide its members with the same sense of practical achievement that was provided by the WMCA.

Between sixty and seventy working men attended the dinner held on 17 November 1863, to celebrate the first anniversary of the WMCA and the Leeds Intelligencer reported that "a much larger number" joined them to listen to the after dinner speeches. The municipal elections had been held three weeks before the dinner and were a natural topic for discussion. Edwin Batley revealed that the strategy for future elections would be to reassign members from wards in which no Conservative was to seek election to wards where there would be a contest. He concluded that the main consideration for success would be good workers rather than large donations, a statement which implied an aversion to the corrupt practices in which some Conservatives were engaged during municipal elections and indicates that Batley had faith that working class support could be engendered by an appeal to principles rather than the purse.

On 25 January 1864, a meeting was held in Holbeck to decide whether to form a Working Men's Conservative Association in the ward and on 3 February new members were enrolled for that purpose. According to the Leeds Intelligencer the amount of enthusiasm which prevailed "was such as to take by surprise" the deputation from the Leeds township WMCA. In view of the successful return of a Conservative candidate in the 1864 municipal election it seems reasonable to conclude that the Conservative journal was not exaggerating the response to the Association in Holbeck. Meetings were held in the East ward on 2 February and two weeks later in order to form a branch organization and on both occasions Edwin Batley emphasized the practical nature of the Association. On 16 February, he asked members to assist him in his endeavours to purge the register.[128]

A general meeting of the WMCA was held on 23 March 1864 for the purpose of appointing officers and a deputation from the Leeds Conservative Association was present. Councillor and Guardian William Middleton was elected president and the three vice-presidents were: James Woodhouse, a cloth manufacturer whose brother had contested Holbeck for the Conservatives in the 1861 and 1862 municipal elections; Nathan Jowett, a tobacconist; and J.T. Carr, a partner in a firm of drysalters and dyewood cutters. E.W. Batley and J.T. Vickers, a hairdresser, were elected secretaries, and Abraham Wray, the son of William Wray the Conservative Councillor and Guardian, became treasurer. It was revealed at the meeting that Conservative working men had only become organized in three wards.[129] Nevertheless, expansion of the network continued and four months later the Leeds Mercury recorded that the WMCA had established itself in the West ward.[130]

The lack of press reports of meetings followed by the successes at the municipal election of 1864, in the North East and Holbeck wards suggests that the WMCA was absorbed in the minutiae of registration and preparation for the election. It is apparent that the Conservative journal was justified in crediting the WMCA with being responsible for an injection of interest and spirit into the proceedings in the wards.[131]

Encouraged, no doubt, by its electoral triumphs the WMCA organized a dinner to honour G.S. Beecroft on 2 January 1865, and the Leeds Intelligencer recorded that the Association was established in most of the wards by then. The Leeds Express, obviously miffed because its reporter had not received an invitation to the dinner, concluded that the affair had been a complete failure because over six hundred attended when provision had been made for only four hundred and fifty! In an attempt at sarcasm which was probably nonetheless truthful, the newspaper published a poem entitled "The Feast of the Tory Brigade" after Tennyson's opus on the exploit of the Light Brigade in the Crimea:

> Working men, journeymen,
> Labourers onward,
> We'll show the Radicals
> How they have blundered,
> Edward Baines loudly cries
> He'll give us the franchise;
> Beecroft more worldly wise,
> Gives us a dinner!
> Into the Corn Exchange
> Rushed the Six Hundred.[132]

Like its radical contemporary, the Leeds Times was also excluded from the invitation list and the newspaper, displaying extreme acerbity claimed that the WMCA must "belong to the 'secret orders' for its very existence has hitherto been unknown". In its opinion the term 'Conservative working men' implied a combination of incongruities - the voluntary organization of a class to oppose its own claims and interests.[133] Both of the radical newspapers and the Leeds Mercury found it impossible to understand any group of politically organized working men which did not have, as its prime objective, the extension of the franchise. The speeches of the Conservative MP and the secretary of the WMCA provide ample evidence of the difference between the LWMPRA and its Conservative rival.

Beecroft assured the working men that if the Church were the heart and the Government the head of the nation, then the working class was its backbone and muscle. Since the working class was "so necessary and so useful" it was the responsibility of the Church and State to take good care of it. Cheap and plentiful food, "rational" amusement and suitable education should be provided by a "wise, paternal, and stable Government". Unlike Beecroft, Batley at least mentioned the franchise but he suggested that it would neither be prudent nor patriotic to give the masses unlimited sway. Before the "privilege of citizenship" was extended a close examination of the intellectual condition of those who were to be enfranchised should be undertaken. Edward Baines would have concurred with Batley's first statement but would have argued that the 'close examination' was self evident by the statistical evidence of increased sales of newspapers and the spread of education.

At the end of his speech Batley described "more minutely the especial objects for which the Leeds Working Men's Conservative Association had been established". Clearly, the main thrust of activities continued to be directed toward electoral organization rather than an extension of the franchise. The last press report of WMCA activity prior to the parliamentary election of 1865, was concerned with the Association's second annual meeting on 1 March. No membership figure was released although it was claimed that there had been a rapid increase in the number of both honorary and ordinary members. Nathan Jowett succeeded William Middleton as president and Samuel Seanor, a druggist, replaced Jowett as vice-president. William Foster, possibly a compositor, joined Batley as one of the two secretaries and two auditors were appointed - perhaps to replace an unsatisfactory treasurer![134]

VII

The opening months of 1865 found Leeds Liberals in a dispirited mood. While the Leeds Mercury focussed its attention on the national scene and concluded: "Liberalism has . . . fallen into a ditch and is in rather a soiled and helpless condition", the Leeds Express concentrated on the state of the local Liberals.[135] The radical weekly commenced one of its periodic assaults on "that unwieldy and effete association of Liberals known as 'the Leeds Reform Registration Association' . . . (which had) long proved an obstruction to reform in our borough". It charged the Society with "utter disregard of the advanced Reformers . . . unbusinesslike proceedings . . . (and) subjugation to a clique".

Efforts had been made by the advanced Liberals in early 1864 to have Thomas Hughes, a barrister and author of "Tom Brown's Schooldays", adopted as the second Liberal candidate. According to the Express, he had been invited to meet the committee of the Registration Society, was asked to give them "an idea" of his political views rather than made a speech, and was subsequently condemned by the "cold and phlegmatic" members of the committee because they judged him to be no speaker! Once again, the minority group of advanced Liberals had had to "bow to the dictum of the inactive party". Members who had allowed unwittingly their subscriptions to lapse could be struck off the membership list by the president or secretary. The chairman was accused of selecting those who were to receive notices of meetings "in accordance with his tastes and personal predilections". Reopening old wounds, the radical journal suggested that Forster's defeat in 1859, had been due mainly to the "supineness" of the Society and their delay in bringing Forster forward as a candidate. Finally, it was noted, the friends of the Conservative MP had been canvassing for promises of support for months.

On 28 January 1865, the Leeds Express began the publication of a series of letters from "A Liberal Elector" on the state of the Liberal party in Leeds with the eighth, and final, letter being printed on 13 May.[136] The first letters were an attack on Edward Baines and even his efforts for reform were judged as "unfortunately counteracted by the impression of former crotchety failings".[137] Although he was credited with helping the cause of reform until 1832, his acceptance of the Reform Act as final had caused a split in the Liberal party in Leeds.[138] Another serious breach in the party had been caused by Baines' opposition to national education and even when he had suppressed his attacks on it in 1859, and accepted an extension of the franchise he "could not at once uproot the tares he had planted - religious bigotry . . . (being) the hardest of all mistakes to uproot".[139] As the parliamentary election drew near the "Liberal Elector" modified his opinion on Baines so that the last letter proclaimed the publisher of the Leeds Mercury to be "one of us, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh".[140]

It is strange that the Leeds Express continued to publish the attacks on Baines during February, for the initial letter and an editorial on the same day seem to have been heeded. The annual meeting of the Reform Registration Society was held on 1 February, the day after Lord Amberley had spoken at the meeting on parliamentary reform, and it was decided that a special meeting should be called to consider the desirability of putting a second Liberal candidate into the field. Both radical newspapers had no doubt that Lord Amberley would be selected.[141] The Leeds Express summarized the harmony that it believed existed as a result of the meeting on parliamentary reform:

> We believe . . . that at this moment there is not a Liberal in Leeds who would not willingly lend his aid to carry a wide measure for Parliamentary Reform; . . . on the other hand there is scarcely a Radical who would not be satisfied, for the present at least, with a moderate extension of the franchise.142

The newspaper also held the optimistic opinion that the borough's parliamentary register was "greatly" in favour of the Liberals. The Leeds Mercury was more circumspect, noting that the election would be fought on a "comparatively untried" register.[143] In fact, all the parliamentary revisions since 1859, except for that of 1863, had resulted in net gains by the Conservatives. Although the gains were not large and they may not have been statistically significant, it is probable that they would have been important from a psychological viewpoint in the same way that the show of hands on nomination day was considered noteworthy.[144]

While the LWMPRA had issued the invitation to Amberley to speak on parliamentary reform it was the Reform Registration Society which selected the deputation to invite him to stand for election. Certainly the committee of the LWMPRA was invited to attend the meeting of the Society which selected the deputation, but it appears to have been *pro forma* and no one on the LWMPRA executive was chosen as a member of the deputation.[145]

It was arranged that Amberley would speak to Liberal electors on 15 and 16 March and non-electors on 17 March. The decision to hold three small meetings rather than a large one proved to be a godsend for it allowed Amberley to recover from a serious error which he had made at the first meeting. In January he had declared himself in favour of a large extension of the franchise but on 15 March he was not prepared to give assurances that he would vote for the £6 franchise. Darnton Lupton attempted to defend Amberley by claiming that the matter would be discussed the next evening but Elihu Finnie disagreed that the issue could be deferred and said that after Amberley's statement on 31 January the audience had "some right" to expect something more definite. He wanted to know whether Amberley would vote in favour of Baines' bill. Amberley's response was that since he did not live among the working classes he could not say whether they ought to be admitted to the suffrage! He had been told that many who lived in £6 houses could perfectly well afford to live in £10 houses and so he could not think that they were "persons who are entitled to be admitted to the suffrage". Councillor Gaunt retorted that if Amberley was not prepared to go to the extent of the £6 franchise then he "would not walk two yards to support him". Joseph Lupton, confessed that the breath had been taken out of him by what Lord Amberley had said and he moved a resolution which reminded his lordship that no candidate would satisfy the electors of the borough if he did not support at least the £6 franchise. Only thirty or forty in the crowd of fifteen hundred opposed the resolution.[146] After the meeting Amberley confided to his wife that "it seemed all up with any chance of Leeds". According to Lady Amberley he had only changed his mind on the franchise question at the last minute believing that an educational franchise was a better basis for an extension of the suffrage than a rental franchise.

The next morning Darnton Lupton took Amberley to see some £6 houses and he "found them (sic) very respectable and intelligent people" according to his wife.[148] In the afternoon he met the Reform Registration Society's committee and a *quid pro quo* was reached whereby Amberley would support Baines' bill and the Society would pass a resolution asking him to stand for election. Frederick Baines chaired the meeting of 2,200 Liberal electors and he explained that due to his inexperience Amberley had thought that he could discuss different aspects of his opinions separately during the course of the three meetings. He had not intended to discuss the franchise on the previous night! For his part, Amberley recorded that on the basis of his visits during the morning, not only were the £6 householders" very respectable and excellent people" but also he was not prepared to say that even £5 householders "might not be perfectly fitted to be added to the list of electors".[149] Amberley's nomination was moved by Alderman Kelsall, chairman of the Reform Registration Society, seconded by Alderman Carter and carried with only four dissenting votes.[150] Russell wrote to his son and chastised him for confirming his opinions on the morning after the first meeting instead of before it and he reminded Amberley that his own advocacy of the £6 franchise in 1859 and 1860 had not been initiated "without full enquiry".[151]

At the third meeting Amberley explained, in response to a question, that his principal objection to Mr. Baines' bill had been that it might possibly prevent further legislation. Although he was in favour of a larger measure he would, nevertheless, support Baines' bill if there were no prospect of obtaining his own wishes. Messrs. Speed and Rawlinson of the LWMPRA executive committee were the mover and seconder respectively of a resolution calling upon Liberal electors to support Baines and Amberley as the party's candidates.

Although he had managed to recover somewhat from his _faux pas_ at the first meeting, it is not surprising that Amberley declined to become a candidate until he was "assured of a fair prospect of success".[152] The Liberal canvassing started in the third week of March and was carried out contemporaneously with a vigorous canvass for G.S. Beecroft.[153] Evidently Amberley, who had accompanied his father on a visit to the Duke of Bedford on 10 March, had been successful in making financial arrangements for a campaign since, on 26 March, he sent a letter to Russell recording that he had written to thank the Duke for his offer to pay the election expenses and that he was "glad to think they . . . (would) not be large".[154] Amberley's comment on expenses reinforces a conclusion, based on the absence of evidence to the contrary, that Leeds parliamentary elections, unlike those in some of the wards in local elections, were free from bribery.

It is clear that from the opening moments of the 1865 parliamentary campaign - for it really began in Leeds approximately four months prior to nomination day - the Liberal party had a serious problem with respect to maintaining the loyalty of Liberal electors to their two candidates. The Leeds Mercury probably realized the problem as early as 25 March when it tried to kill Beecroft's candidacy with kindness rather than attack him as a political opponent. It emphasized that he was owed a great debt of gratitude for his services and that the election campaign would not be waged against him with the slightest personal ill-feeling. Beecroft was an excellent representative, it was suggested, if Parliament dealt only with local affairs but he was not the individual who could look after the welfare of the United Kingdom or help to settle imperial matters such as free trade, religion and the extension of the franchise. The Leeds Express regretted that "many professing Liberal electors . . . (urged) the re-election of Mr. Beecroft on the ground that he . . . (had) well looked after the interests of the town". Mr Beecroft, it was acknowledged, was of genial disposition but that quality did not make him a statesman. In contrast, Amberley was a brilliant statesman in embryo.[155]

Frederick Baines alerted his brother to difficulties which were being experienced with the Liberal canvass in a letter of 7 April 1865. He reported that there were between eight hundred and nine hundred voters who were 'doubtful' or neutral but there were also "many hundreds wholly unaccounted for". While the Liberal canvass had only been completed in three or four wards, the Conservatives had finished the canvass for Beecroft the day before his letter was written. Frederick noted a factor which probably explained the tardy progress of his party's canvass:

> It is a fact that very few indeed of the liberal voters favour an extension of the suffrage: the great body promise for our candidates in spite of their convictions on this point.156

In spite of the favourable press reports of the Liberal canvass for Amberley, Darnton Lupton wrote to him expressing the opinion that he was not pleased with the prospect of his lordship's success and that he was convinced it was no use for Amberley to stand for election.[157] It is understandable that, given his pessimistic prognostication, Lupton was not a member of the deputation which was appointed to take the requisition to Amberley. Joseph Lupton, his more radical brother, was a member and he dined with Amberley on 8 May and urged him to stand. The next day, Alderman Carter and Councillors Tatham and Linsley met Amberley and assured him that he would have a majority of fifty-four votes over Beecroft but they also reported the Conservative forecast of a majority of 150 for their candidate. Baines, it was noted, was safe.

Amberley and his wife discussed this situation while the deputation walked in the woods for two hours. He was very doubtful about accepting the nomination, thought it a great risk, and wanted to take a week to consider the matter. This contradicts the assertion made by the Leeds Mercury after the election, that Amberley's only concern before becoming a candidate was to ensure that Baines' seat was secure! Lady Amberley urged him to accept immediately. Probably against his better judgement, but obviously anxious to please his wife of six months, Amberley complied with her wishes.

During the course of the conversation with the deputation, Councillor Linsley claimed that he had brought Amberley's name to the attention of the Reform Registration Society after reading the announcement of Amberley's marriage. This avowal, if true, detracts somewhat from the claim that Amberley's candidacy was inspired by the LWMPRA.[158]

A difficulty for the Liberals during the pre-election period was to define the philosophy of their party and the problem is self evident in an editorial printed by the Leeds Mercury in May 1865:

> What we mean by Liberalism is not . . . easily defined. It cannot be comprehended within any set of measures, it cannot be gauged by any length or strength, or positiveness of pledges. Liberalism has assumed shapes as various as matter itself . . .. To forecast the principles . . . of the Liberal party . . . would be wholly impossible, for the operation of reform may be wanted in any number of directions.[159]

Unfortunately, the vagueness suggested by the Mercury was far from apparent to voters like Marmaduke Hodgson Davis, who saw the £6 franchise all too clearly as an election pledge which would swamp middle-class men by overwhelming them with trades-union men. As a Liberal he would never give his vote to "such a frantic scheme".[160]

The momentum of the canvassing activities in March and early April could not, of course, have been maintained and so it is not surprising to find the Leeds Express noting, one month before the nomination day, the quiescent state of the town. Its Conservative rival made the same observation and called upon Conservative ward committees to establish efficient organizations and guard against over confidence.[161] However, it was the Liberal candidates who were the first to start the election campaign when they addressed a meeting of approximately ten thousand electors and non-electors in the coloured cloth hall yard on 29 June. According to the Leeds Intelligencer, Amberley had difficulty in making himself heard and the people on the outskirts of the crowd "provided some pastime for themselves". The comments of the Conservative journal were partisan but probably quite accurate. Amberley's appearance and stature worked against him even more when he addressed outdoor meetings. During the Liberal electors' meetings in February, which were held indoors, the Leeds Times had concluded:

> The language even of wisdom and eloquence loses inevitably some of the power due to its intrinsic merit when addressed to a popular audience by a person like Lord Amberley, of low stature, slight figure and extremely youthful appearance. We are all more or less swayed by the illusions which associate, almost insensibly, in our minds physical bulk and strength with intellectual vigour.[162]

Evidently charisma was important in mid-nineteenth Leeds parliamentary politics and great importance was placed upon the physical attributes of the aspiring politician!

George Skirrow Beecroft addressed a meeting of his friends and supporters in the Music Hall on 30 June. The number in the audience was not published but it had been infiltrated by a sizeable group of Liberal adherents who, naturally, voted against the resolution which proposed that Beecroft stand for election.[163] Several of the Conservative ward meetings were subjected to more vigorous disruption. At the combined meeting for the North, North East and East wards on 3 July there were several interruptions and the chairman left hurriedly at the end of the meeting to prevent further hostile comments.[164] At the West ward meeting on the following day "a number of lads and some few non-electors did their upmost to create a disturbance".[165] The opposition continued in Hunslet and Holbeck ward meetings on 6 July and the latter meeting had to be abandoned by the Conservatives.[166] Although the disturbances might have been discouraging, they provided an excellent opportunity for comments by Beecroft (at Hunslet) and his supporters (at the West and Holbeck ward meetings) that the noise was generated by "£6 franchise men" and in that way the Conservatives could attract the votes of those Liberals who did not support the franchise extension. A letter to the Leeds Mercury from John Jowitt, a staunch Liberal, which was published on nomination day, confirmed that "some good Liberals" were hesitating on their vote because they had not approved of the £6 Franchise Bill which Baines had introduced.[167]

In an attempt to secure the support of Roman Catholic electors, the Leeds Mercury published an editorial on 4 July, criticising Lord Derby for using, during a debate on the Roman Catholic Oaths Bill, an analogy which likened Roman Catholics to vicious dogs who wished to get their muzzles off. Unfortunately the editorial writer made an ill-contrived attempt to treat Derby's faux pas in a satirical vein and incurred the wrath of Vernon Blackburn, a Roman Catholic barrister, who claimed to have been a Liberal supporter until the publication of the editorial. At Beecroft's West ward meeting, Blackburn expressed the hope that the Catholics would read the article "in which Mr. Baines condescended to call the Catholics of Leeds dogs and curs". The Leeds Mercury fought back claiming that Blackburn "did the Conservative party one of those services that can only be rendered by a knave or a fool".[168] At the Conservative Mill Hill ward meeting of 5 July, Blackburn countered the Mercury's attack on him by explaining that he understood that the original editorial had been satirical but that it had, nonetheless, the implication that Catholics who voted for Beecroft would be treated like dogs. Although Beecroft had been absent from the House of Commons when the vote on the Catholic Oaths Bill was taken he had, unlike Baines, promised to support the principle of one uniform oath for all Members of Parliament.

Finally, the Leeds Mercury offered to withdraw the language it had used.[169] The editorial gaffe, however, had roused "a Catholic Elector" to write to the Leeds Intelligencer and the author recalled that the Mercury had used "insulting language . . . in regard to the Holy Father on every occasion in treating of the Italian question". The correspondent wondered how a Catholic could assist the man or party who had "lent their countenance to Mazzini, the Pope's most implacable and dangerous foe". It was suggested in a letter to the Leeds Mercury that the Catholic electors of Leeds were greatly divided in opinion about the candidates.[170] In the opening days of the election campaign the Leeds Times had offered the opinion that the Catholics of Leeds were so disgusted with the conduct of the Tory party on the Catholic Oaths Bill that they would give an unqualified support to Baines and Amberley.[171] Events during the election campaign suggest that the prediction was unlikely to have been accurate.

The drink issue was raised in the form of questions to the candidates about their position on the Permissive Bill legislation which, if enacted, would have allowed a municipality to prohibit the sale of liquor within its boundary if it had the support of a majority of the inhabitants. Beecroft dealt with his own record of opposition to the bill at a ward meeting on 3 July. He declared himself opposed to it because it would allow the House of Commons to abdicate its reponsibility for punishing drunkenness and he also considered it to be class legislation which would allow the rich to keep casks of wine at home but would prevent the working man from getting his "humble glass of ale". Furthermore, the Leeds supporters of the permissive legislation had determined to make the issue a turning point in the election by ejecting himself and electing Amberley in his place. Therefore, he suggested, the retailers of liquor should plump for him.[172] Lady Amberley recorded in her diary that Beecroft had been drunk at that meeting and "that he often spoke under the excitement of drink".[173] The Conservative candidate appears to have provided living proof of his sincerity on the drink issue!

Councillor George Tatham, president of the Leeds Temperance Society, had been the driving force behind the movement to elect teetotallers to town council.[174] In 1860, the Society had canvassed the West and North West wards to determine support for the Permissive Bill.[175] When the issue came before Parliament again, nearly five years later, the Society organized a meeting on 17 January 1865, at which regret was expressed that Edward Baines would not vote for the bill.[176] Nevertheless, a member of the audience at a Liberal ward meeting on 4 July declared that it was true that the "Permissive men" were resolved to support Baines and Amberley.[177]

At a meeting of supporters of the Permissive Bill held on 12 April 1864, Councillor Tatham had estimated that out of a total seven hundred public houses in the borough there were only about three hundred parliamentary voters. He mused that the "Permissive votes" outnumbered them.[178] It has been possible to identify 168 licensed victuallers and 158 beersellers who voted in the 1865 parliamentary election and so

Tatham's estimate was reasonably accurate. Over seventy-four percent of the voters in the two groups plumped for Beecroft and nearly seven percent of the electors in both groups split their votes between a Liberal and Beecroft. Only approximately nineteen percent in each group either gave both votes for the Liberal candidates or plumped for one of them. Eight of the eleven licensed victuallers who split their votes between the parties voted for Beecroft and Amberley. The split votes in the beersellers group were distributed more equally with only six of the eleven voting for Amberley and the Conservative candidate. Of the five individuals in both groups who plumped Liberal, four of the votes were cast for Amberley.[179] It is not possible to determine whether the "permissive" voters exceeded the number of voters in the liquor trade but it is clear that the Conservative candidate held an even more significant share of the liquor interest's vote than he had enjoyed in the 1859 parliamentary election. It is possible that by their hostility the "permissive" voters helped to increase Beecroft's control of the liquor trade vote and therefore contribute to his overall share of the vote. On the other hand the reluctance of Baines, a well-known teetotaller, to support the Permissive Bill may have caused some of the more stringent permissive voters to remain neutral in the election.

After more than a decade of discussion and lobbying on the subject, Leeds became an assize town on 10 June 1864. In spite of the opposition of the West Riding magistrates, who favoured the claims of the neighbouring town of Wakefield, and a final plea from the House of Lords, the first assizes in the town were held on 8 August 1864.[180] The Leeds newspapers were all magnanimous in their praise of their MPs and the Leeds Intelligencer agreed that both Baines and Beecroft had been untiring in their efforts.[181] Both members were able to claim some credit for their work during the election campaign and Baines noted the success of the attempt to secure the assizes for Leeds in his printed address to electors. At the Liberal ward meeting of 4 July a question was raised about the extent to which Beecroft could claim any credit for bringing the assizes to the town since most of the Conservative MPs had voted for Wakefield. The next evening Beecroft pointed out that Leeds would not have had the assizes at all if he had not spoken to Mr. Disraeli, as the division bell was ringing, and persuaded him to lead a number of his friends from the House. To its credit, the Leeds Mercury confirmed Beecroft's "great work" in keeping some Conservatives from voting against Leeds and the newspaper bore "cheerful testimony to the excellent service he did". Nevertheless, at the mid-point of an election campaign, support for a political opponent could hardly be considered a wise action on the part of a newspaper which was owned by a Liberal candidate![182]

During the campaign an anonymous circular was distributed to the chemists and druggists of Leeds in which Edward Baines was accused of having favoured a parliamentary bill prepared by the Pharmaceutical Society rather than another which had been proposed by the United Society of Chemists and Druggists. Beecroft was credited with having supported the legislation favoured by the latter Society. While both groups were attempting to regulate the sale of medicines and drugs and to introduce an educational test for those dispensing them, an initial draft of the legislation proposed by the United Society made it appear that the sale of drugs by grocers and shopkeepers would be eliminated.

Baines had expressed doubts about the wisdom of a measure which would interfere with the trade of an estimated two thousand five hundred retailers in the Leeds area. In an open letter Baines defended his actions and challenged anyone to prove whether, in seven parliamentary sessions, he had neglected any of the thousands of applications for support which had been made by Leeds burgesses.[183] The circular appears to have had an impact on the chemist and druggist group if a comparison is made between the votes cast by the group in 1859 with those cast in 1865. In 1859, Baines had beaten Beecroft by two votes but the position of the two candidates was reversed six years later with Beecroft leading Baines by four votes. A five percent swing to Beecroft had taken place in the druggists and chemists group in contrast to a two percent swing in the electorate overall.[184] Obviously, it is possible that the loss which Baines sustained among the chemists' and druggists' group may have been compensated by votes from the grocer-druggist group but the difficulty of determining who were grocer-druggists prevents an analysis of its members.

Another area in which Baines was placed on the defensive was the matter of the Leeds Bankruptcy Court scandal. In May 1864, the registrar of the Leeds Court of Bankruptcy had been accused of improper conduct in the discharge of his duties but was allowed to resign 'on medical grounds' with a pension of £600 per annum. The new registrar, Mr. Welch, had obtained his appointment by virtue of his name having been brought to the attention of Lord Westbury, the Lord Chancellor, by the Hon. Richard Bethell - the Chancellor's eldest son. Welch had previously agreed to pay £1,500 of Bethell's debts.[185] Although a select committee of the House of Commons absolved Lord Westbury of corruption in June 1865, even the Leeds Mercury felt that his conduct merited "far stronger terms of reprobation than the committee sought fit to employ".[186] On 3 July the Mercury published another editorial which questioned the Lord Chancellor's judgement; the same day that Edward Baines was recalled to London to vote for the Government against a vote of censure on Lord Westbury.

Leeds Conservatives alleged that Baines had gone to London to vote for Lord Westbury. Baines had to explain that he would have voted against a motion charging the Lord Chancellor with corruption, but that he did not vote for a motion charging "culpable laxity" since support for a motion to adjourn had the effect of obtaining the resignation of the Lord Chancellor. While Baines was correct in the technical sense it placed him in the position of appearing to defend Westbury.[187] In the words of the Leeds Intelligencer "on behalf of one so unfit for his position Mr. Baines sacrificed a day from the important work of his canvass".[188]

VIII

The hustings on Woodhouse Moor were, unlike the previous parliamentary election, placed so that the Liberal supporters assembled in an area of the moor that was higher than the space occupied by Conservative adherents. The Leeds Intelligencer explained that in those circumstances it had been impossible to judge the relative masses of the supporters of the parties and offered it as an explanation for the show of hands being deemed in favour of Baines and Amberley.[189]

William Beckett Denison, who nominated Beecroft, and John Ellershaw, the chairman of Beecroft's election committee, promoted their candidate as a 'Liberal Conservative'. Evidently a majority of the crowd was not persuaded to show hands in his favour even with such an all-encompassing label. The Leeds Mercury claimed that Baines and Amberley had three hands raised in their support for every two shown for Beecroft; it urged Liberal electors to follow up the "glorious victory" and pointed to Liberal successes in London and in the boroughs of Yorkshire and Lancashire which had polled on 12 July.[190]

The poll was a reverse of the result at the show of hands:

Beecroft	3,223
Baines	3,045
Amberley	2,902

An unprecedented number of votes had been cast in a poll which was, in the Mercury's opinion, conducted "with great spirit". As the Liberal daily mentioned, the choice of the non-electors had not been that of the electors but even more startling was the fact that both Liberals had polled "several hundreds" fewer than their canvass had led them to expect.[191] In fact, Amberley had revealed to his father that the Liberal committee had not been confident of success at least four days before the election. Calculations had been thrown into doubt by the discovery that a paid canvasser in one of the wards had "not been strictly honest".[192] On nomination day Amberley's wife was told that the Conservative committee had placed Beecroft three hundred votes ahead of Baines.[193]

The Leeds Mercury recorded that some of those who had signed the requisition to Amberley and had pledged themselves to both Liberals had plumped early for Beecroft on polling day. Honourable men on both sides, it was suggested, would "regard them with strong reprobation".

Others - presumably those who had plumped later in the day - were less guilty of such "treachery". The newspaper concluded that a reason for the "lamentable failure" to redeem promises owed something to the long period which had elapsed between the first canvass and the election.[194]

In contrast the Leeds Express noted that the contest had been waged by the Liberals because the Reform Registration Society had calculated a Liberal majority of between eight hundred and one thousand voters on the parliamentary register. The radical weekly claimed that the Association should be abolished if it could not keep better records and that personal defections at the last moment could not account for the Liberal defeat! It opined: "there must be something radically wrong in the commissariat department of the Liberal camp". The newspaper wondered whether the leading men of the Liberal party had "gone to work with a firm determination to win" and made the "necessary expenditure which a contested election absolutely requires".[195] Indeed, the number of cabs conveying voters and canvassers was "unusually large" and the majority of them were decorated with blue colours.

The Conservative journal suggested that the victory of the party which it supported was due not only to the work on polling day but also to the attention that had been paid to registration in previous years.[196] Nevertheless, one must attribute some of Beecroft's success to his own personality. Even the radical Leeds Express acknowledged him as kind hearted, frank, and free from bigotry. He would not "curtail the people's enjoyment by closing public-houses on a Sunday, neither . . . (did) he consider the theatre a hotbed of inquity, or that the love of horse-racing debases and degrades a man". His election by 921 votes more than he had received in 1859 was evidence of "broader views on matters domestic in the town of Leeds".[197] Edward Baines favoured restricting the sale of liquor and disliked the theatre and horse-racing. The characteristics which made him unpopular in the House of Commons would have made him unpopular with some Leeds electors. It could not have been by chance that the Leeds Intelligencer published, on polling day, comments about Baines' unpopularity by the London correspondent of the Edinburgh Weekly Herald. Baines, unlike the majority of MPs, stood aloof from society and did not attend the theatres, balls or operas. In comparison to John Bright who strode into the House of Commons as if he were a king there, Baines glided in "mincingly and always . . . (seemed) to think of himself as a saint amongst sinners". While Bright spoke "in manly tones", Baines spoke "so simperingly that he always . . . (gave) you the idea of a Dissenting minister addressing a prayer meeting, rather than an English gentleman talking to English gentlemen".[198]

In a letter published in the Liberal press under the title "Who Are the Traitors?" the writer expressed his eagerness for the publication of the pollbook in order that he should obtain an answer to his question. He suggested that the most intense dissatisfaction prevailed in the matter among the immense mass of the working classes.[199] A response four days later from "A Liberal Elector" stated that the question need not have been asked by "any enlightened man of the old Liberal party" because the issue which turned the election was the £6 franchise of which "many educated Liberals disapproved".[200]

In August, the Leeds Times published an analysis by a correspondent "whose statements may be received with the utmost confidence" that estimated approximately one hundred of those who signed the requisition to Amberley had actually plumped for Beecroft. The correspondent hoped that the names of those who had signed the requisition would have their names printed in the pollbook in italics - a forlorn hope given the fact that it was to be issued by Christopher Kemplay, publisher of the Leeds Intelligencer![201]

While the pollbook may have helped in the identification of the "traitors" an analysis of the results reveals that it is marred by inaccuracies. For example, the poll results issued at the declaration gave Beecroft 3,223 votes while an analysis of the pollbook produces 2,918 who plumped for him, 188 who split between him and Baines and 75 in a split with Amberley. In total the pollbook records only 3,181 votes for Beecroft. Such a discrepancy casts doubts upon the book's accuracy and at least one complaint was made after its publication.[202] However, after making adjustments in the matrix of results and assuming a total of 6,118 voters (the sum of the voters recorded in the pollbook is only 6,025) Beecroft obtained a plumping vote of forty-eight percent of the total number of voters. He obtained a further three percent as the result of splits with Baines and slightly more than one percent from splits with Amberley. Voting across party lines was clearly very low revealing that those who had deserted the Liberal ranks may have tended to make a complete break rather than split their votes between the parties.

The Leeds Times concluded that the Conservatives had "not gained a triumph; they have simply escaped a defeat".[203] Of all the elections fought in the period under consideration the newspaper's comment probably applied least to the parliamentary election of 1865. Clearly

Edward Baines was not in tune with the Leeds electorate on the issue of the parliamentary franchise and he lost votes because of that. To the Leeds elector the activities of the LWMPRA were a threat to the established order while the organization of Conservative working men posed no such danger. The disruptive tactics used at Beecroft's ward meetings would reflect badly on the Liberals and tend to discourage further middle class £10 voters from supporting that party.

It is extremely likely that the Liberal party organization was deficient. In May Baines had written to his brother-in-law expressing concern:

> I wish we had a good man as Secretary to manage the Election . . .. There are hundreds of voters as yet unseen: this should not be . . . inquire from Mr. Baynes [Liberal Registration agent] how the canvass has been conducted and give all the suggestions you can . . . for supplying defects. We should have someone who is a match for Bond (?) and Cariss [Conservative solicitors] and I fear we have no one.204

Finally, Baines was placed on the defensive on the issues of the assizes, the distribution of drugs, the Leeds Bankruptcy Court scandal and, of course, the Permissive Bill. Amberley suffered due to his vacillation on the issue of the £6 franchise, the fact that he was not a local candidate, the lack of support from leading Liberals, and possibly, his small stature![205] George Beecroft undoubtedly benefited from the activities of the WMCA and while he did not object to an extension of the franchise it was not based on a wholesale reduction of the type proposed by Baines. One of the criticisms levelled against Beecroft by the Leeds Mercury had been that while he had served the constituency well, something more was needed from a representative who sat in a body which legislated for the Empire. Leeds electors obviously disagreed with the latter part of that evaluation.

[1] Derek Fraser, "Edward Baines", in Pressure From Without In Early Victorian England, ed. Patricia Hollis (London: Edward Arnold, 1974), p. 207. In fact many opposed Baines in Parliament not because his measure was too extreme but because it only addressed one aspect of reform and failed to consider the issues of the ballot and redistribution of seats. Cf. F.B. Smith who refers to Baines as a radical. F.B. Smith, The Making of the Second Reform Bill, (Cambridge University Press, 1966), pp. 21-22 and 51.

[2] See chapter 3 for a discussion of the definition of and method used to determine 'new' members of the three bodies.

[3] The calculations for contested wards in elections for town council and the Board of Guardians are based on information provided in Fraser, Urban Politics, pp. 58 and 146.

[4] Leeds Times, Leeds Mercury, 31 March 1860.

[5] Leeds Times, Leeds Express, 21 April 1860.

[6] Leeds Express, 28 April 1860.

[7] Fraser, Urban Politics, pp. 106-107.

[8] Dr. Fraser has determined that the equal sharing of the Overseers' posts between Conservatives and Liberals began in Leeds in the early 1840's but this did not prevent a bitter row breaking out between the Overseers and Guardians in 1845 over the use of offices by Overseers at the Workhouse. It was 1850 before the two bodies dined together again. Fraser, Urban Politics, p. 85 and "Poor Law Politics in Leeds", pp. 38-40, and 49.

[9] Leeds Intelligencer, 26 November 1859. The newspaper claimed that it did not know who the promoters of the bill were but the involvement of the Overseers as a group became clear when their solicitor, Charles Naylor, attended a Board of Guardians meeting on 30 November to inform them of the proposal. Leeds Mercury, 1 December 1859.

[10] Leeds Intelligencer, 3, 10 December 1859. Leeds Mercury, 13 December 1859. It was reported that the expenses associated with the bill would be £1,500. Leeds Express, 21 January 1860.

[11] Leeds Intelligencer, 24 December 1859.

[12] Ibid., 31 December 1859. A deputation from the Association went to London in February to lobby during the committee stage of the bill. Leeds Mercury, 18 February 1860. The Ratepayers' Association appears to have functioned intermittently between 1854 and 1858 because it is recorded as being "formed" again in July 1858. Leeds Intelligencer, 24 July 1858.

[13] Leeds Mercury, 3 March 1860.

[14] Ibid., 29 March 1860.

[15] Leeds Express, 31 March 1860.

[16] Leeds Intelligencer, 21 April 1860.

[17] Edward Baines to Henry Bailey Legg, 30 April 1860 in Leeds Mercury, 28 July 1860.

[18] Leeds Times, 20 April 1861.

[19] William Middleton, the chairman, mentioned the matter at the first Board meeting of the new year. Leeds Intelligencer, 27 April 1861.

[20] Leeds Mercury, 25 May 1863. The Hunslet Board of Guardians had only been established in September 1862! Leeds Mercury, 30 September 1862.

[21] Leeds Express, 6 February 1864.

[22] Leeds Intelligencer, 1 October 1859, Leeds Mercury, 4, 8 October 1859.

[23] Leeds Times, 15 October 1859.

[24] Leeds Mercury, 27 October 1859, Leeds Intelligencer, 29 October 1859.

[25] Cf. Fraser, Urban Politics, p. 125. Dr. Fraser has recorded only seven Conservative Councillors for 1859-60 but the bye-election gave the party an additional seat.

[26] Leeds Intelligencer, 5 November 1859. The Municipal Corporation Act of April 1859 had clauses which set penalties for personation and bribery at municipal elections. Briggate, a major street, was the western boundary for the Kirkgate ward. The North, North East, and East wards were also east of Briggate.

[27] Leeds Mercury, 3 September 1859.

[28] Ibid. A House of Lords committee had been receiving evidence on corruption practised at municipal elections "with the express view that the lowest class of voters ought to be disfranchised".

[29] Leeds Express, Leeds Intelligencer, 5 November 1859.

Participation Rate in 1859 Municipal Election

	Ward*	%	Rank
1	Mill Hill	72.8	1
2	Kirkgate	72.1	2
3	Headingley	No Contest	-
4	South	63.8	5
5	West	68.8	4
6	Bramley	16.0	11
7	North West	47.8	9
8	North	52.6	8
9	Holbeck	33.9	10
10	Hunslet	57.7	7
11	East	69.0	3
12	North East	58.4	6

*The wards are ranked in order of rateable value per capita. Cf. Fraser, Urban Politics, p. 219. Hunslet was "wealthier" than Holbeck in 1841 but the positions were reversed in 1871. My table assumes that by 1859 Holbeck was ranked above Hunslet.

[30] Leeds Mercury, 6 October 1860.

[31] Leeds Express, 27 October 1860.

[32] Leeds Mercury, 30 October 1860.

[33] Ibid., 1 November 1860.

[34] Leeds Times, 3 November 1860.

[35] Leeds Express, 3 November 1860. The president of the Irish National Temperance Society wrote to the editor the following week confirming that only a few Irishmen succumbed to "Tory dodging". For the concentration of Irish in Leeds wards see Terence Dillon, "The Irish in Leeds, 1851-1861", Thoresby Society Miscellany Reprint 16 Part 1, n.d..

[36] Leeds Express, 3 November 1860. John Iredale, another Liberal temperance candidate ran in a North West ward bye-election in September 1861 but was defeated by the 'official' Liberal candidate, Robert Addyman.

[37] According to the Leeds Times, Wheelhouse's pre-election address was "flippant where it is not turgid and verbose when it ceases to be boldly self-sufficient". Leeds Times, 20 October 1860. The Leeds Express noted that William Middleton, who had been defeated in the North East ward, had been an excellent member of the corporation but described the two Conservative lawyers as being well-known for their "loquacious propensities". Leeds Express, 3 November 1860.

[38] Leeds Mercury, 29 October 1861.

[39] Leeds Express, Leeds Intelligencer, 26 October 1861.

[40] At a meeting called to celebrate the return of the Liberal candidate it was claimed that the Conservatives had spent £150 while the Liberals had spent £26. 3s.6d.

[41] Leeds Times, 2 November 1861.

[42] Ibid., 10 May 1862.

[43] Ibid., 12 July 1862.

[44] David Newton was not a teetotaller. On 7 January 1859, he had sued for damages resulting from a fracas in a public house which had taken place 7 October 1858. He was awarded £10. Leeds Express, 8 January 1859, Leeds Intelligencer, 15 January 1859.

[45] Leeds Intelligencer, 1 November 1862. A few Conservatives were reported as having supported Newton. His son was appointed a junior clerk in the borough treasurer's office in August 1863. Leeds Express, 22 August 1863.

[46] Leeds Express, 8 November 1862.

[47] Leeds Mercury, 31 March, 10, 15, 22 April 1863, Leeds Express, 4, 18 April 1863, Leeds Times, 4, 11, 25 April 1863.

[48] Leeds Express, 16 May 1863.

[49] Leeds Times, 13 June 1863. Wheelhouse did not attend the ward meeting and in a letter to the organizers claimed that he had been elected to represent not only the special interests of the ward but also the general interests of the borough. Leeds Intelligencer, 20 June 1863.

[50] Leeds Mercury, 17 June 1863, Leeds Express, 20 June 1863.

[51] Leeds Express, 13 June 1863.

[52] Ibid., 10 October 1863.

[53] Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Express, 3 October 1863.

[54] Leeds Intelligencer, 24 October 1863.

[55] Leeds Express, 17 October 1863, Leeds Mercury, 3 November 1863. The Mercury recorded that Headingley had never before been so closely polled. Twelve hundred of the seventeen hundred electors voted.

[56] Leeds Mercury, 28 October 1863, Leeds Express, 31 October 1863.

[57] Leeds Intelligencer, 31 October, 7 November 1863.

[58] William Glover Joy was labelled "Liberal-Conservative" in the Liberal press but it seems that he was not included as a Conservative for purposes of calculating the Conservative gain. On the other hand Joseph Wright must have been included as a Conservative in the calculations. Leeds Mercury, 3 November 1863.

[59] Leeds Mercury, 3 November 1863, Leeds Express, 7 November 1863.

[60] William Ellis, a town councillor for Bramley from 1851-54, was chairman of the Armley Reform Association from March 1860 to September 1862, and he appears to have operated the Association as a distinct entity from the LWMPRA. He became a member of the committee which organized the National Reform Conference in London on 21 May 1861 and he was the chairman and treasurer of the committee which organized the Reform Conference in Manchester on 19 April 1864. Ellis was the first treasurer of the National Reform Union. Leeds Express, 10 March 1860, 27 September 1862, 5 March, 23 April 1864.

[61] The Conservatives claimed that their exposure of the Crown Point scandal had led to diminished costs to the ratepayers, when contracts had been renewed, for the removal of 'night soil'.

[62] Leeds Express, 22 October 1864.

[63] Leeds Mercury, 2 November 1863.

[64] Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Times, Leeds Express, 5 November 1864.

[65] Leeds Express, 5 November 1864. 2,400 of the 3,400 electors went to the polls.

[66] Leeds Mercury, 2 November 1864. Francis Ferns was sued by the landlord of a Headingley inn for £17.15s. 3d, an amount outstanding from the 1863 election! It was also reported that a Conservative printing firm was owed money by Ferns so it is small wonder that he did not endear himself to the Conservatives. Leeds Express, 19 November 1864.

[67] Leeds Times, 5 November, 3 December 1864.

[68] Evidence of Councillor Edwin Gaunt of Leeds before the House of Commons Select Committee on Parliamentary and Municipal Elections, 13 April 1869, paragraph 1572. In 1854, Kirkgate with 1.9 percent of the population of the borough had 12.2 percent of the public houses. Leeds Times, 2 September 1854.

[69] Leeds Express, 3 December 1864.

[70] Leeds Mercury, 5 December 1864. According to one correspondent, bribery in the East ward had been so prevalent at one time that it had been known as the "Beer Barrel ward" but that the problem had not been so evident for a few years prior to the 1864 bye-election. Ibid., 13 December 1864.

[71] Leeds Times, Leeds Express, Leeds Intelligencer, 11 February 1865.

[72] Evidence of Councillor Edwin Gaunt before the Select Committee on Parliamentary and Municipal Elections, 13 April 1869, paragraph 1559.

[73] Leeds Express, 11 February 1865.

[74] Leeds Mercury, 8 March 1865.

[75] The conviction of Edward Craven, the Liberal ward secretary, was questioned since, it was claimed he was convicted without clear proof. Leeds Mercury, 10 March 1865, Leeds Express, 11 March 1865. Liberal solicitors Middleton and Barrett defended Wray and Joy and were joined by Conservative solicitor Wheelhouse in the prosecution of the Liberal party workers!

[76] Leeds Intelligencer, 29 April 1865.

[77] Leeds Mercury, 12 May 1865. The newspaper suggested that the first step towards a reduction of bribery would be the agreement of both sides to abstain from conveying voters to the polls.

[78] Henry Brand to Edward Baines, 21 March 1861 and undated draft reply of Baines, Baines MSS 1, Leeds City Archives.

[79] Leeds Mercury, 1 May 1860.

[80] Evidence of Christopher Heaps before the House of Lords Select Committee on the Elective Franchise in Counties and Boroughs, 4 June 1860, paragraphs 3451 and 3454.

[81] Leeds Mercury, 15 March 1860, Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Times, 17 March 1860.

[82] Leeds Express, 16 June 1860.

[83] Lowerson, "Political Career of Baines", p. 197.

[84] Leeds Times, Leeds Express, Leeds Mercury, 21 July 1860. An identical report appeared in all three newspapers, suggesting that the account of the meeting was prepared by a member of the Association rather than a newspaper reporter. Cf. D.G. Wright, "Leeds Politics and the American Civil War," Northern History, IX (1974): 106. Wright states, incorrectly, that the LWMPRA was founded in December 1860.

[85] Leeds Express, Leeds Times, 4 August 1860.

[86] Leeds Express, Leeds Times, Leeds Mercury, 18 August 1860.

[87] Elihu Finnie et al. to The Working Men of Leeds, 22 August 1860, Baines MSS 60/17, Leeds City Archives.

[88] *Leeds Times*, 28 January 1860. *Leeds Mercury*, *Leeds Express*, *Leeds Times*, 1 September 1860.

[89] *Leeds Times*, 21 January 1860.

[90] *Leeds Express*, *Leeds Mercury*, *Leeds Times*, 15 September 1860. It is interesting to compare the reports of the meeting. The *Express*, which was giving strong support to the Association left out the details of the audience size and enrolment of new members but it did record the information about the November meeting. The *Mercury* and *Times* provided details of the audience and enrolment but did not mention the possibility of a November meeting.

[91] William Hickes to Edward Baines, 3 September 1860, Baines MSS 60/19, Leeds City Archives.

[92] *Leeds Express*, 22, 29 September, 6 October 1860, *Leeds Mercury*, 22, 29 September, 6, 20 October, 24 November 1860, *Leeds Times*, 20 October 1860.

[93] *Leeds Mercury*, 24 November 1860, *Leeds Times*, 1 December 1860.

[94] *Leeds Mercury*, 8 December 1860.

[95] Ibid., 13 December 1860. *Leeds Intelligencer*, 15 December 1860. The *Leeds Times* reported that the meeting was composed mainly of working classes but "the middle classes were present in sufficienct numbers to show that the objects in view had their concurrence and support". *Leeds Times*, 15 December 1860. William Hickes estimated that 1,600 to 1,800 of the 2,500 present were "working men in the truest sense", and he claimed that the LWMPRA had a membership of between six hundred and seven hundred. *Leeds Mercury*, 5 January 1861.

[96] *Leeds Mercury*, 13 December 1860.

[97] Ibid., 23 February 1861.

[98] *Leeds Times*, 2 March 1861. Thomas Blackburn Baines (Edward Baines' son), Alderman Joseph Middleton, Alderman Kelsall and Councillor Carter moved the resolutions and the three seconders from the LWMPRA central committee were John Geves, Archibald Scarr, and John Armitage.

[99] *Leeds Mercury*, 20 April 1861. The number of signatures on the ward petitions totalled 23,574. There were also petitions from specific occupational groups such as the carpet weavers and letter-press printers. *Leeds Express*, 13 April 1861. Baines' bill was defeated by 52 votes (193 for, 245 against).

[100] *Leeds Mercury*, 26 September 1861, *Leeds Express*, *Leeds Times*, 28 September 1861.

[101] *Leeds Express*, 23 November 1861.

[102] Leeds Mercury, 11 February 1862. The other members of the delegation were Elijah Rawlinson, a master tailor, Archibald Scarr, a fruiterer and John Armitage.

[103] Leeds Mercury, 14 October 1862, Leeds Express, Leeds Intelligencer, 18 October 1862. The Intelligencer disputed the Associations' claim that it had seven hundred members.

[104] Leeds Express, 19 December 1863. D.G. Wright has argued that the Civil War re-united Leeds' Radicals. "Leeds Politics and the American Civil War," p. 98.

[105] Leeds Mercury, 2 January 1864.

[106] Ibid., 9 January 1864.

[107] Ibid., 16 January 1864.

[108] Edward Baines to Locke King, 28 December 1863, Baines MSS 57, Leeds City Archives.

[109] Leeds Express, 30 January 1864.

[110] Leeds Mercury, 24 February 1864.

[111] Leeds Times, 27 February 1864.

[112] Leeds Mercury, 19 March 1864. The first meeting was held two days after the editorial reminder.

[113] Ibid., 25 March 1864.

[114] Leeds Intelligencer, 9 April 1864.

[115] Leeds Mercury, 14 April 1864, Leeds Express, Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Times, 16 April 1864.

[116] Baines' bill was defeated on second reading 11 May 1864, by a vote of 272 to 216. It was during the debate that William Gladstone made the memorable comment "every man who is not presumably incapacitated by some consideration of personal unfitness or political danger is morally entitled to come within the pale of the constitution". Gladstone had written to Baines after the defeat of the Franchise Bill in 1861 deeply regretting the bill's failure and concurring in the political argument which Baines' speech had "so well" expressed. W.E. Gladstone to Edward Baines, 20 April 1861, Baines MSS 94, Leeds City Archives.

[117] Leeds Mercury, 5 January 1865, Leeds Times, 7 January 1865.

[118] Leeds Express, 28 January 1865.

[119] Leeds Times, 14 January 1865.

[120] Bertrand Russell and Patricia Russell, eds. The Amberley Papers (London: George Allen and Unwin, reprint ed., 1966), vol. 1, pp. 351 and 358.

[121] Leeds Mercury, 9 December 1864. Russell thought that Baines and Forster represented the more radical portion of the Liberal party and advised Amberley against committing himself to it so early in life, although he thought Baines' proposition on the franchise could be supported. Russell to Amberley, 20 January 1865, cited in Russell, Amberley Papers, p. 351.

[122] Leeds Mercury, 1 February 1865, Leeds Times, 4 February 1865.

[123] Leeds Intelligencer, Leeds Times, 20 May 1865.

[124] Leeds Express, 3 June 1865.

[125] Leeds Times, 24 June 1865.

[126] Leeds Intelligencer, 21 November 1863.

[127] Ibid. The Leeds Express recorded a gain of 105 for the Conservatives in the North East ward. Leeds Express, 3 October 1863.

[128] Leeds Intelligencer, 30 January, 6, 20 February 1864.

[129] Ibid., 26 March 1864. Abraham and his brother Edwin had taken over the family fruiterer's business from their father William Wray.

[130] Leeds Mercury, 24 August 1864.

[131] Leeds Intelligencer, 5 November 1864.

[132] Leeds Express, 7 January 1865.

[133] Leeds Times, 7 January 1865.

[134] Leeds Intelligencer, 7 January, 4 March 1865.

[135] Leeds Mercury, 2 Feburary 1865, Leeds Express, 28 January 1865.

[136] Leeds Express, 28 January, 4, 11, 18 February, 4 March, 1, 22 April, 13 May 1865. The newspaper had commented on Forster's defeat at the polls in issues in 1860 and 1861. His lack of success was attributed to lack of support from "Old Whigs", who were frightened of his liberality, and Nonconformists, who disliked him because he was a national educationist. Leeds Express, 8 September 1860, 16 February 1861.

[137] Ibid., 28 January 1865.

[138] Ibid., 4 February 1865.

[139] Ibid., 11, 18 February 1865.

[140] Ibid., 13 May 1865.

[141] Ibid., Leeds Times, 4 February 1865.

[142] Leeds Express, 4 February 1865.

[143] Leeds Mercury, 8 February 1865.

[144] The following table illustrates the discrepancy between Conservative and Liberal calculations but overall the 'tide' appears to have been flowing with the Conservatives. The net gain results from the success a party had in sustaining its claims and objections vis à vis those of the opposing party:

REVISION OF PARLIAMENTARY REGISTER - LEEDS

Year	Party with Net Gain	Net Gain	Source of Information	Date
1859	Conservatives	1	Leeds Mercury	24 Sept.
		1	Leeds Intelligencer	24 Sept.
1860	Conservatives	41	Leeds Mercury	22 Sept.
1861	Conservatives	"slight"	Leeds Mercury	28 Sept.
		28	Leeds Intelligencer	18 Sept.
1862	Conservatives	6	Leeds Mercury	20 Sept.
		20	Leeds Intelligencer	28 Sept.
1863	Liberals	20	Leeds Mercury	19 Sept.
1864	Conservatives	74	Leeds Express	24 Sept.
		112	Leeds Intelligencer	24 Sept.

[145] Leeds Express, 11 February 1865, Leeds Mercury, 14 February 1865. The deputation included Aldermen Kelsall and Carter, Councillor Linsley and Darnton and Joseph Lupton.

[146] Leeds Mercury, 16 March 1865, Leeds Express, 18 March 1865.

[147] Russell, Amberley Papers, pp. 380 and 382, Leeds Express, 18 March 1865.

[148] Russell, Amberley Papers, p. 380

[149] Leeds Mercury, 17 March 1865.

[150] Ibid. The Mercury claimed that the vote was unanimous but Lady Amberley noted four hands raised against the motion. Russell, Amberley Papers, p. 381.

[151] Russell to Amberley, 17 March 1865, in Russell, Amberley Papers, pp. 382-383. Russell apologized two days later for having written to his son on the basis of an initial report of Amberley's position. Nevertheless, he advised Amberley to prepare himself by reading, among other books, Machiavelli's "Discorsi". Amberley had provided the Conservative press with an easy target. "The Owl" wrote in The Times:

> Amberley sings at the Music Hall
> Pledges, refuses - meets with a fall.
> Eats the refusal - backs Baines; but then
> Can B sharp set A flat in tune again?

The Leeds Intelligencer printed the item on 25 March 1865.

[152] Leeds Mercury, 17 March 1865.

[153] Ibid., 24 March 1865.

[154] Russell, Amberley Papers, p. 378. Amberley to Russell, 26 March 1865, in Russell, Amberley Papers, pp. 384-385.

[155] Leeds Mercury, 25 March 1865, Leeds Express, 1 April 1865.

[156] Frederick Baines to Edward Baines, 7 April 1865, Baines MSS 59, Leeds City Archives.

[157] Russell, Amberley Papers, p. 389.

[158] Ibid., p. 390. Russell urged his son not to decide against Leeds without hearing from him. He wrote that numbers were deceiving and he would judge much more by the zeal of his supporters. Leeds Mercury, 19 July 1865. The Mercury was responding to an assertion in The Times that Baines had "bound" Amberley, before he was allowed to stand, to refrain from anything that would jeopardize the chance of Baines' own re-election.

[159] Leeds Mercury, 20 May 1865.

[160] Leeds Intelligencer, 13 May 1865. See also letters to the editor from Samuel Exley, Ibid., 8 April 1865 and from "An Orange" in Leeds Mercury, 23 May 1865.

[161] Leeds Express, Leeds Intelligencer, 17 June 1865.

[162] Leeds Times, 4 February 1865.

[163] The Leeds Times, 1 July 1865, estimated that one-third of the audience were Liberals or interested non-partisans. The Leeds Intelligencer, 1 July 1865, recorded that one hundred had voted against the resolution.

[164] Leeds Mercury, 4 July 1865.

[165] Leeds Intelligencer, 8 July 1865.

[166] Leeds Mercury, 7 July 1865.

[167] Ibid., 12 July 1865.

[168] Ibid., 5 July 1865.

[169] Ibid., 6 July 1865.

[170] Leeds Intelligencer, 8 July 1865, Leeds Mercury, 6 July 1865.

[171] Leeds Times, 1 July 1865.

[172] Leeds Mercury, 4 July 1865.

[173] Russell, Amberley Papers, p. 396.

[174] E.P. Hennock has calculated that in 1868 there were fifteen members of town council who were members of the Leeds Temperance Society. The Society was established in September 1859. He suggests, inaccurately, that Tatham was a councillor from 1856. In fact the Quaker leather manufacturer was elected in the West ward in 1861 after running there unsuccessfully in 1859 and 1860. Hennock, Fit and Proper Persons, p. 215. The error is repeated in Wright, "Leeds Politics and the American Civil War," p. 120 note 3.

[175] Leeds Mercury, 21 April 1860. The conclusion was that there was significant support but between one-third and one-half had been returned blank. Of one thousand which were completed in the West ward it was estimated that only two hundred were borough electors. Leeds Mercury, 6 October 1860.

[176] Ibid., 18 January 1865.

[177] Ibid., 5 July 1865.

[178] Leeds Times, 16 April 1864.

[179] See Chapter 6.

[180] On 4 April 1864, the West Riding magistrates had resolved to memorialise the Home Secretary in favour of Wakefield by a majority of sixty-five to thirty-two votes. Leeds Mercury, 5 April 1864. The House of Lords asked the Queen to reverse the Order in Council but the request was denied.

[181] Leeds Intelligencer, 23 January 1864.

[182] Leeds Mercury, 5, 6 July 1865.

[183] Ibid., 8 July 1865.

[184] The complications of determining a swing in two member constituencies are discussed by Derek Fraser in Urban Politics, pp. 223-227 and in his "The Fruits of Reform: Leeds Politics in the Eighteen-Thirties", Northern History, VII (1972): 110-111. His method of comparing the leading Conservative against the leading Liberal has been used in the study of chemists and druggists.

VOTES OF CHEMISTS AND DRUGGISTS IN LEEDS PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

Year	Beecroft	Beecroft/ Baines	Beecroft/ Amberley	Baines/ Forster	Baines/ Amberley
1859	24	2	–	26	—
1865	34	1	1	—	31

[185] Leeds Times, 1 July 1865.

[186] Leeds Mercury, 27 June 1865.

[187] Ibid., 7 July 1865.

[188] Leeds Intelligencer, 8 July 1865.

[189] Ibid., 13 July 1865. The day was fine and estimates of the crowd range from 50,000 to 70,000.

[190] Leeds Mercury, 13 July 1865.

[191] Ibid., 14 July 1865.

[192] Amberley to Russell, 9 July 1865, in Russell, Amberley Papers, p. 398.

[193] Russell, Amberley Papers, p. 399.

[194] Leeds Mercury, 14 July 1865.

[195] Leeds Express, 15, 22 July 1865. Alderman Kelsall the chairman of the Reform Registration Society had been branded "half Conservative" the year before and he was an opponent of any further extension of the franchise. Leeds Express, 23, 30 July 1864. The Leeds Times also acknowledged deficiencies in organization but, like the Mercury, attributed Beecroft's success to Liberal defections. Leeds Times, 15 July 1865.

[196] Leeds Intelligencer, 15 July 1865.

[197] Leeds Express, 15 July 1865.

[198] Leeds Intelligencer, 13 July 1865. Somes, the author of the Sunday Closing Bill, and Lawson, who introduced the Permissive Bill, lost their seats. Pope, an advocate of the Maine Law - prohibition - was unsuccessful in his attempt to obtain a seat.

[199] Leeds Times, Leeds Mercury, 22 July 1865.

[200] Leeds Mercury, 26 July 1865.

[201] Leeds Times, 12 August 1865.

[202] Councillor Wood complained that while the pollbook recorded that he had not voted, he had actually voted for Baines and Amberley. Leeds Mercury, 11 November 1865. In its issue two days after the election the Leeds Intelligencer claimed that 205 electors had split their votes between Beecroft and Baines and another 73 had split between Beecroft and Amberley. Leeds Intelligencer, 15 July 1865.

[203] Leeds Times, 15 July 1865.

[204] Edward Baines to Alexander Ritchie, 12 May 1865, Baines MSS 45/15, Leeds City Archives.

[205] The Marshalls, for example, had indicated that they would not help to promote Amberley. Frederick Baines to Edward Baines, 7 April 1865, Baines MSS 59, Leeds City Archives.

CHAPTER 6

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS: A PSEPHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

> The statist ought to remember how liable are loose and defective masses of figures to be used by both sides in controversy.
>
> Edward Baines, September 1858[1]

I

It is clear from his general interest in statistical information, and what must have been a particular interest in voting patterns, that Edward Baines would have appreciated the opportunities which computer programmes present for psephological analysis. Indeed, with the problems which plagued the Liberal party in the Leeds parliamentary election of 1865, he would probably have been thankful to have had a simple record-keeping programme. Part of the present study of Leeds parliamentary elections depends on the use of the computer as an efficient filing system for data which was obtained from pollbooks, trade directories and the 1851 census return. An elementary statistical analysis of the data base was achieved by running part of the series of programmes which are known collectively as the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).[2] A sample of electors has been drawn from the 1852 election and the votes of the electors have been recorded, as far as possible, for the subsequent elections held in 1857, 1859, and 1865. Hereafter this will be known as the longitudinal study.

Another, but quite separate, aspect of the pollbook analysis is based upon the identification of as many voters as possible in particular occupational groups. Their votes in each of the five elections were recorded but this occupational study did not require the use of a computer.

II

It has only been during the last quarter century that historians of English politics have recognized the significance of pollbooks as sources of information. In 1960, a study of the source of voter support for John Wilkes, the reformer, was published. Its author, G. Rudé, correlated the Middlesex pollbooks of 1768-69 with other information to determine that Wilkes owed his success to urban voters in East London and that the propertied and professional classes opposed him consistently.[3] Two years later J. Cannon drew the attention of historians to pollbooks. In 1967 the results of an analysis by J.R. Vincent was published in which he had examined most nineteenth century pollbooks that identified voters by occupation.[4] One reviewer, however, expressed disappointment that Vincent's work did little to suggest the many possibilities for the study of individual and group behaviour over time.[5]

W.A. Speck and W.A. Gray recognized the need to produce longitudinal analyses of individual voters' preferences to provide a "dynamic as well as a static view of the electorate".[6] Their computer-based investigations of early eighteenth century parliamentary elections in several English counties revealed that a substantial floating vote existed. It suggested a participatory model of voting behaviour rather than the deference model which had been suggested by Sir Lewis Namier.[7] In 1971, M. Drake published an analysis of voting behaviour of electors in Ashford, Kent during the period 1852-65.[8] He noted that his study lacked general validity since the town polled only three percent of the total votes cast in the county but his method and conclusions provide a clear indication of the possibilities which exist for this type of exercise. With respect to Leeds, D. Fraser followed a sample of one hundred voters through the six parliamentary elections held in the period 1832-41.[9]

III

Apart from recording the name of the voter and the allocation of his votes, pollbooks vary considerably in the additional information which they provide. With respect to Leeds, for example, the only other characteristic which is common to the five pollbooks, 1852-65, is that the addresses of the voters are also listed. The pollbooks which were produced for the first election, the 1857 bye-election, and that held in 1859, recorded voters alphabetically by ward.[10] On the other hand those printed by Christopher Kemplay, the publisher of the Leeds Intelligencer, for the general elections of 1857 and 1865 merely contain an alphabetical listing of voters in the borough as a whole.

Although it is useful that the first pollbook listed voters by ward since it enabled more accurate identification of the sample in later elections, caution must be used before placing too much emphasis on voter mobility between wards. In the first place the arrangement of Kemplay's pollbooks precludes absolute certainty about the ward in which an elector cast his vote and secondly some electors were registered to vote in more than one ward by virtue of the property which they owned in different parts of the borough. A change in ward of voting might have been the result of an elector's decision to assist a party in one area instead of another. In other words it might have been a political 'move' rather than a move in the physical sense which might be interpreted from a social or economic perspective. Bearing in mind the preceding caveat the information provided in Table I reveals a marked change during the period in the rank of Mill Hill 1, West 1, Chapel Allerton and Headingley. While Mill Hill 1 experienced a decrease in the share of the sample voting in the ward the other three wards experienced an increase in their share of the sample of electors. It is possible that electors were moving from the central business district of Mill Hill to the prestigious residential suburb of Headingley or at any rate were less prepared to return to the location of their businesses to vote. The South and Bramley wards had a relatively small but steady loss of position while Hunslet had a modest increase in its share of the voting sample. On the other hand the Holbeck and East wards display a ranking pattern that is somewhat erratic suggesting, perhaps, that voters in those wards may have been more susceptible to losing their position on the register because both tended to be poorer wards in terms of rateable value per capita.[11] For most wards, though, the most noteworthy feature is the consistent share of the sample which they held throughout the thirteen-year period.

Only the 1859 pollbook indicates whether a voter remained neutral in the election or whether he had died, while the pollbook issued for 1865 notes only the latter characteristic. In these circumstances it has not always been possible to determine whether a voter in the sample did not vote in the post-1852 elections due to loss of registration, absence from Leeds on polling day, illness, neutrality, or death.

TABLE I

MOVEMENT OF THE SAMPLE OF ELECTORS BETWEEN WARDS

Ward	1852		1857		1857 Bye		1859		1865	
	% of Sample	Rank	% of Sample	Rank	% of Sample	Rank	% of Sample	Rank	% of Sample	Rank
East	4.3	12	3.4	15=	3.4	16	3.6	12=	3.6	10=
Kirkgate	8.7	2	8.1	2	8.0	3=	8.0	4	7.9	3=
Mill Hill 1	5.1	9	4.9	9=	5.1	8=	3.2	15=	2.7	16=
Mill Hill 2	9.1	1	10.5	1	8.0	3=	9.2	1	8.8	2
North	7.4	5	7.2	4=	7.7	5	6.8	6	7.3	6
North East	4.7	11	4.3	13	4.6	11	3.4	14	3.0	12=
North West	7.7	4	6.7	6	6.8	6	7.5	5	6.7	7=
South	5.5	8	4.9	9=	4.8	10	3.6	12=	3.0	12=
West 1	4.8	10	4.7	12	4.4	12=	4.1	10	7.9	3=
West 2	8.0	3	7.6	3	8.5	1	8.5	2=	11.2	1
West 3	3.3	15	3.4	15=	3.9	14	2.9	17	3.0	12=
Armley	2.1	18	2.0	18	1.9	18	1.9	18=	1.8	18=
Beeston	1.3	20	1.1	19=	1.5	19	1.5	20=	0.6	21
Bramley	6.4	7	6.0	7	6.1	7	5.6	8	4.9	9
Chapel Allerton	2.3	17	2.2	17	2.2	17	3.2	15=	3.0	12=
Farnley	1.1	21	1.1	19=	1.0	20=	1.5	20=	1.5	20
Headingley	3.7	14	5.6	8	5.1	8=	6.6	7	6.7	7=
Holbeck	3.8	13	4.9	9=	4.4	12=	4.4	9	3.6	10=
Hunslet	6.5	6	7.2	4=	8.2	2	8.5	2=	7.9	3=
Potternewton	1.4	19	0.7	21	1.0	20=	1.9	18=	1.8	18=
Wortley	2.8	16	3.6	14	3.6	15	3.9	11	2.7	16=

Therefore, no attempt has been made to determine the reason for non-participation in an election. However, in a study which was published in the Leeds Mercury in 1857, it was determined that 56.3 percent of those who had voted in the 1832 parliamentary election had died during the twenty-five year period. This provides an average annual loss through death of approximately 2.3 percent of the voter group. The present study shows that there was a total loss of 376 electors in the sample during the period 1852-65 (see Table XI). If a constant death rate of 2.3 percent per annum is assumed, then approximately 210 voters died and the remainder no longer voted due to other reasons.[12]

The pollbooks are, of course, useful in helping to provide an overall view of the Leeds electorate but for a more complete picture pollbook data must be supplemented by information from other sources. For example, while the Leeds pollbooks provide an analysis of the number of votes received by the candidate and usually indicate the total number of electors who polled, they do not normally note the number of registered voters. Even when that information is provided, as in the 1852 pollbook, there is no recognition of the difference between the gross number of electors and the net register which results from the elimination of those with more than one property qualification.[13] A summary of information about the Leeds electorate in the period 1852-65 is provided in Table II.

Clearly the borough's electorate remained small throughout the period but it was not completely static. While the population increased by 29.3 percent between 1852 and 1865, the net number of electors increased by 37.5 percent. On the other hand, when one compares the net register to population in 1852 and again in 1865 the increase

TABLE II

REGISTERED ELECTORS AND VOTERS

1852-65

Population(A) of Borough	Election	Gross Register	Net Register	Voters	Voters as % of net Register	Municipal Voters
172,270(B)						
175,543	9 July 1852	6,360 (1)	5,151 (2)	3.451 (3)	67.0	15,787 (4)
						10,219 (8)
192,865	28 March 1857	6,204 (5)	5,311 (6)	4,361 (7)	82.1	
192,865	5 June 1857	6,204 (5)	5,311 (6)	4,134 (9)	77.8	
200,264	30 April 1859	6,797 (5)	6,015 (5)	4,511(10)	75.0	23,000(11)
207,165(C)						
226,891	13 July 1865	8,000(12)	7,085(13)	6,025(14)	85.0	
259,212(D)		40,000(15)				40,000(15)

(A) The population figures given between the census dates are estimates that have been calculated on the basis of the average annual rate of increase. See C.J. Morgan, "Demographic Change, 1771-1911," in A History of Modern Leeds, ed. Derek Fraser, p. 48.

(B) 1851 Census.

(C) 1861 Census.

(D) 1871 Census.

Key continues on next page

TABLE II-Continued

(1) Pollbook, Leeds Borough Election 1852.
(2) *Leeds Mercury*, 1 May 1852. 1,129 were duplicate voters and 80 were dead.
(3) The 1852 pollbook shows 3,449 but an actual count of the voters in the pollbook reveals 3,451 voters. Cf. 3,528 cited in Michael Drake, *Introduction to Historical Psephology*, (Open University Press, 1974), p. 124.
(4) *Leeds Intelligencer*, 3 April 1852. Includes duplicate votes.
(5) Evidence of E. Bond before Select Committee of the House of Lords into the Elective Franchise in Counties and Boroughs, 9 May 1860, paragraph 1991.
(6) E. Bond reported 5,223 and the *Leeds Mercury*, 15 January 1859 claimed that the net register was 5,399. The figure suggested is the average of the two.
(7) Pollbook, Leeds Borough Election, March 1857.
(8) *Leeds Mercury*, 16 October 1855. After deductions for duplicate voters the net municipal register was reduced to 7,248.
(9) Pollbook, Leeds Borough Election, June 1857.
(10) Pollbook, Leeds Borough Election, 1859.
(11) *Leeds Mercury*, 3 November 1859.
(12) An estimate based on: 7,616 for 1862-63 register cited in J.R. Martin, "Electoral Statistics: a Review in the Working of Our Representative System from 1832 to 1881," *Journal of the Statistical Society* 47 (1884): 102 and 8,485 recorded in the Leeds Register of Electors 1865-66.
(13) Cited in letter of William Hickes to *Leeds Mercury*, 28 January 1865.
(14) Count of voters in Pollbook for Leeds Borough Election, 1865.
(15) Evidence of R. Addyman before House of Commons Select Committee on Parliamentary and Municipal Elections, 13 April 1869, paragraph 1381.

was only from 2.9 percent to 3.1 percent. In 1860, Edward Baines expected that a £6 rental franchise would increase the electorate from a net register of 6,023 to 10,759.[14] The extension which he sought would only have increased the percentage of electors to 4.7 percent of the 1865 Leeds population. Nevertheless, the reduction in the franchise qualification would have had a significant impact on the composition of the borough's electorate. A Parliamentary Return in 1866, which recorded the proportion of working class electors on the parliamentary register revealed that Leeds, with only 7.2 percent of its voters classified in that category, was in joint 191st position on a list of two hundred boroughs.[15] Baines estimated that three-fourths of the new electors admitted on the £6 franchise would be from the working classes and that overall they would form thirty-three percent of the Leeds electorate.

It was difficult to obtain information about the municipal register from the newspapers and the figures produced in the seventh column of Table II indicate the gross register. In spite of fluctuations,[16] inhabitants who had the municipal franchise increased at a more rapid rate than those who held the parliamentary franchise. An historian of Leeds' municipal history has suggested that the municipal electorate in the mid-nineteenth century was unusually large in comparison, for example, to Manchester and that Leeds had a relatively high proportion of poorer voters.[17]

Finally, the difference between the number of those who held the parliamentary franchise and the number who voted shows that there was an overall average participation rate of 77.9 percent in the five elections. Dr. Fraser suggested that the participation rate of 85.5

percent of eligible voters in the 1847 election was lower than that for any previous election.[18] When he compared the participation of electors in the period 1832 to 1847 with their participation in 1852 he considered that the poll in the 1852 election was unprecedentedly low.[19] It is clear, then, that the participation rate in Leeds elections which were held in the period 1852-65 was lower than in the elections held in the twenty-year period which preceded it. Obviously the participation rate in 1852 was affected because many Conservatives did not rally in support of the two candidates who entered the contest at the last minute.

To some extent the fluctuations in the participation rate coincide with the ebb and flow of Conservative party interest which was reflected in the party's organizational activity. In the general election of 1857 the high participation rate might be attributed to the careful planning of Robert Hall. On the other hand the majority of George Beecroft in the bye-election of that year may have owed more to the neutrality of disaffected Liberals than superior Conservative preparation. In 1859, the participation rate continued its decline and, again, the Conservatives may have owed some of their success to problems within the Liberal camp rather than their own planning. The highest participation rate in the period (85.0 percent in the 1865 election) coincided with solid preparatory work on the part of the Conservatives. They went to the extent of sending lady canvassers to the seaside resort town of Scarborough, where many Leeds electors were temporarily located, to encourage Conservative supporters to return to Leeds for polling day.[20]

IV

The longitudinal study of a group of electors is based on a systematic sample of approximately twenty percent of the voters in the parliamentary election of 1852. Since the electors are ordered alphabetically rather than by another characteristic it is reasonable to conclude that the sample drawn has the element of randomness which is essential to all scientific sampling, and that the results which are obtained will be as precise as those obtained from a random sample of the same size.[21] Details of the sample, together with the population of the wards in 1851, are provided in Table III.

None of the pollbooks used in this study contained information about the occupation of electors and so the Leeds trade directories of 1851, 1853, 1857, and 1866 were used to collect data for this variable. As T.J. Nossiter has pointed out, the information from trade directories is second-hand, possibly out-of-date, and even when changes of address and in spelling have been accounted for one can never be sure whether one is dealing with a father or a son.[22] While Nossiter is prepared to let the rules of statistical probability cope with any inaccuracies which may occur when using trade directories, the approach used in this study has been more cautious and information which appeared to be doubtful was omitted. The result has been that the occupations of thirty-four (4.8 percent) of the 704 voters in the original sample have not been ascertained.

Access to the enumerators' returns for the 1851 census made it feasible to cross-reference occupation data and, in addition, provided details about age, marital status, place of birth and the number of children, relatives, lodgers and servants who slept in the household on

TABLE III

SYSTEMATIC SAMPLE DRAWN FROM 1852 POLLBOOK

Ward	No. of Voters	% of Total No. of Voters	No. in Sample	Sample as % of Ward	Population(1) (1851 Census)	% of Total Population
East	149	4.3	30	20.1	17,419	10.1
Kirkgate	305	8.8	61	20.0	3,337	1.9
Mill Hill I	175	5.1	36	20.6	5,414	3.2
Mill Hill II	312	9.0	64	20.5		
North	252	7.3	51	20.2	14,452	8.4
North East	160	4.6	33	20.6	21,590	12.6
North West	266	7.7	54	20.3	12,270	7.1
South	190	5.5	39	20.5	6,676	3.9
West I	171	5.0	35	20.5	20,173	11.8
West II	276	8.0	56	20.5		
West III	111	3.2	23	20.3		
Armley	74	2.1	15	20.3	6,108	3.6
Beeston	42	1.2	9	21.4	1,973	1.1
Bramley	223	6.5	45	20.2	8,949	5.2
Chapel Allerton	77	2.2	16	20.8	2,497	1.5
Farnley	36	1.0	8	22.2	1,722	1.0
Headingley	125	3.6	26	20.8	6,105	3.6
Holbeck	134	3.9	27	20.1	14,152	8.2
Hunslet	225	6.5	46	20.4	19,472	11.4
Potternewton	50	1.5	10	20.0	1,384	0.8
Wortley	98	2.8	20	20.4	7,862	4.6
Total	3,451		704		171,555	

Note: The first eleven wards were located within Leeds township and the remainder were out-townships.

(1) From the Leeds Mercury, 3 May 1851. (Unofficial results.)

census night.[23] Since time was limited it was possible to collect data only for some electors in six wards. Three were Liberal strongholds and three wards tended to place the Conservative candidate at the head of the poll; one ward in each group was an out township. Details of the sample are provided in Table IV.

The least success in locating voters in the enumerators' returns was in Kirkgate ward - an area where some electors may have voted because they owned property but where they obviously chose not to live! Electors who voted in Mill Hill presented a similar problem although it was to a lesser extent than Kirkgate.

Voters varied in age from nineteen to seventy-six years with a mean age of 43.4 for the group. This result is slightly lower than the mean age of forty-four years which was determined by T.J. Nossiter but it may be a consequence of restricting the sample to six wards.[24] Those in the enumerators' sample tended to have been born in the borough (47.6 percent) and county of Yorkshire (36.5 percent). Only 1.5 percent of the sample was born in Lancashire with another 2.2 percent of the voters reporting the location of their birthplace in the northern counties. Those born in the South - defined arbitrarily as the area south of a line from the mouth of the River Humber to the mouth of the Mersey River - accounted for 10.3 percent of the sample. While the Irish vote might have been a significant factor in some wards from the point of view of municipal politics, this survey revealed that only 0.7 percent of the Leeds parliamentary voters had been born in Ireland. That group formed 4.9 percent of the total borough population in 1851.[25] Unfortunately, the areas containing the greatest concentration of Irish-born inhabitants - the North, North East and East

TABLE IV

SAMPLE OF VOTERS IDENTIFIED IN ENUMERATORS' RETURNS FOR 1851 CENSUS

Ward	No. of Electors in 1852 Voting Sample	No. for Whom Census Data Found	Census Sample as % of Electors' Sample	Census Sample as % of all Electors in Ward (1852)	Party of Leading Candidate
Mill Hill	100	61	61.0	12.5	CON[1]
Kirkgate	61	27	44.3	8.9	CON[2]
Headingley	26	26	100.0	20.8	CON[2]
South	39	32	82.1	16.8	LIB
West	114	100	87.7	17.9	LIB
Holbeck	27	26	96.3	19.4	LIB
Total	367	272			

[1] Liberal in 1852 and 1857 general election.

[2] Liberal in 1852.

wards - were not included in the census sample and so the present study may have produced a result which underestimates the Irish vote. However, it can also be argued that proportionately fewer of the inhabitants of the poorer wards would have the parliamentary franchise and the East and North East had the lowest rateable value per capita in the borough throughout the period.[26] Certainly it is clear from Table III that the East and North East wards had a greater deficit in terms of their share of voters vis à vis their share of total population than any other wards in the borough.

Only seventy-two individuals in the census group of 272 voters were definitely identified as being employers or employees. Sixty-five of the electors were in the employer category and the remainder were designated employees. The 9.7 percent share of the total held by those in the latter group seems reasonable when it is compared with the Parliamentary Return result of 7.2 percent of the Leeds electorate who were identified as being working class electors.[27] Over half (58.5 percent) in the employers' group had five employees or fewer, a further 29.2 percent of the group employed from six to nineteen employees, and the remainder (12.4 percent) employed twenty or more workpeople. Four employers (6.2 percent of the group) owned establishments which had over one hundred employees.

The vast majority of voters were married (90.1 percent of the 263 for whom responses could be found) and a significant proportion of the group of 272 in the census sample had neither male (39.3 percent) nor female (40.8 percent) children living at home. It is, of course, quite likely that not all the individuals in those categories were childless since their offspring might have left home permanently or, possibly, were away from home on census night. At any event, of those who had children in the household 27.9 percent had one male and 26.8 percent had one female child. Fifty-six voters (20.6 percent) in the census sample had two male children and forty-seven (17.3 percent) had two females. Overall, the 272 voters in the census sample had 626 offspring living at home, an average of 2.3 children per voter with the total number of males (312) almost matching the number of female children (314). The mean age of the census group helps, perhaps, to explain why forty percent of its members had no children at home.

Eighty-six voters reported a total of 145 relatives or lodgers living in the household and a total of thirty-four visitors was reported by twenty-two voters. Slightly more than half (50.4 percent) of the voters reported servants who slept in the house. Most respondents had only one servant but four voters each reported a total of four servants. Somewhat surprisingly it was not the employers of large numbers of workpeople who had a large number of live-in servants but rather two surgeons, a bank manager, and a retired general merchant. Overall, the group of 272 voters in the census sample had less than one (0.7) servants per household although some would have had day servants who should not have been reported in the census.

The work which has been carried out on the census sample helps to provide some appreciation of the social and economic background of voters in six Leeds wards, but more needs to be done before it can be claimed that a comprehensive overview of voters in the 1852 election is obtained. Table V provides a summary of census information by ward and it shows a tendency for voters in 'Conservative' wards to be older, to be more likely to be unmarried but also to have more servants than

TABLE V

CENSUS INFORMATION BY WARD

Ward	Usual Leading Candidate	No. in Sample	Mean Age of Voters	% of Unmarried Voters	No. of Male Children Per Voter	No. of Female Children Per Voter	No. of Servants Per Voter	No. of Visitors Per Voter
Mill Hill	CON	61	42.5	18.6	1.0	0.9	1.0	0.2
Kirkgate	CON	27	43.5	11.5	1.2	1.1	0.7	0.1
Headingley	CON	26	47.7	4.0	1.0	1.1	1.1	0.3
South	LIB	32	43.2	9.4	1.0	1.2	0.4	0.0
West	LIB	100	43.1	7.4	1.2	1.1	0.6	0.0
Holbeck	LIB	26	43.2	3.8	1.6	1.7	0.5	0.1
Average			43.4	9.9	1.1	1.2	0.7	0.1

voters in 'Liberal' wards. Even in Mill Hill, where there appears to be an anomaly, the Liberal section (Mill Hill I) had a mean age of 39.9 while the voters in the Conservative Mill Hill II had a mean age of 44.5. Due to the higher percentage of unmarried men and the higher mean age of voters in Conservative wards it is not surprising to find fewer children per voter than in Liberal wards.

IV

When carrying out a longitudinal study in which an individual is linked with his occupation it is tempting to try to trace his social mobility. The present study, however, is more concerned with the composition of the sample of voters in terms of their representation of the sectors of the Leeds economy in 1852, 1857-59 and 1865. After all, many mid-nineteenth century politicians avowed that they were more concerned that "interests" should get their fair share of parliamentary representation rather than classes.

Even if a study is limited to a classification scheme which attempts to analyse structure rather than mobility[28] the scheme itself can vary from historian to historian. In 1972, W.A. Armstrong made a plea for the establishment of a common basis of classification and his proposal has been adopted in this investigation.[29] It soon becomes apparent that the occupation of the individual voter only becomes important because it enables his allocation to an industrial classification. There were 142 occupational classifications for the 670 individuals for whom data could be found in this study. Using ten as an arbitrary minimum for any occupation the results of an estimation of the more significant occupational groups in the Leeds electorate are shown in Table VI. It is necessary to re-emphasize, especially in the case of the woollen cloth manufacture occupation, that the inclusion of a voter in any group is an indication of an employment in an industrial sector rather than an evaluation of his economic or social status. The woollen cloth manufacture group, for example, includes both owners and employees.

As a cross check on the projection of voters in the electorate, which is shown in column four, a comparison has been made with the actual number of those in the occupational study for whom voting details could be found. The results are shown in Table VII and although there is some discrepancy between the projection from the longitudinal sample and the number of voters in the group who were identified in the occupational study in the 1852 election, this could be accounted for by inaccuracies in the Slade and Roebuck trade directory of 1851. In most cases there is a close similarity between the projection from the longitudinal sample and the number of voters who were identified in the elections of 1857 and 1859 in the occupational study. This suggests the possibility that the composition of the Leeds electorate did not change very much, at least in the first seven years of the period under investigation.

In order to determine how well the 1852 electorate represented the 'economic interests' of the town a comparison has been made between the data from the longitudinal sample and data from the 1851 census. The results, which are shown in Table VIII, reveal that the Dealing, Professional, and Property Owning sectors in the 1852 sample had twice as much voter representation than was their share of the Leeds economy. Occupations included in the dealing sector range from corn, cloth, coal

TABLE VI

MAJOR OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS IN 1852

Occupation	No. in Sample	% of Total in Sample	Estimated No. in Total Electorate
Woollen Cloth Manufacture	41	5.8	200
Licensed Victualler	31	4.4	152
Butcher	29	4.1	152
Shopkeeper	28	4.0	138
Beerseller	26	3.7	128
Cloth Merchant	21	3.0	104
Grocer/Tea Dealer	21	3.0	104
Tailor/Clothier	19	2.7	93
Farmer	18	2.6	90
"Gentleman"	18	2.6	90
Broker	13	1.8	62
Commercial Clerk	13	1.8	62
Corn Merchant	13	1.8	62
Draper	13	1.8	62
Solicitor	12	1.7	59
Boot and Shoemaker	11	1.6	55
Builder	10	1.4	48
Engine Maker	10	1.4	48

TABLE VII

COMPARISON BETWEEN PROJECTION OF NUMBERS ON BASIS OF LONGITUDINAL SAMPLE WITH ACTUAL NUMBERS IN OCCUPATIONAL SAMPLE

Occupation	Projection of Longitudinal Sample	Actual Electors Found in Occupational Study				
		1852	1857	1857 Bye	1859	1865
Licensed Victualler	152	112	162	142	142	168
Beerseller	128	67	120	107	133	158
Cloth Merchant	104	66*	147*	116*	126*	135*
Grocer/Tea Dealer	104	53	84	79	82	98
Solicitor	59	39	52	52	64	63
Boot and Shoemaker	55	43	57	50	42	84
Engineer	48	21	50	44	57	60
Doctor	38	43	48	45	46	53

* Includes woolstaplers.

TABLE VIII

COMPARISON BETWEEN THE SAMPLE OF 1852 ELECTORS AND MALES AGED 20 YEARS AND OVER WHO WERE EMPLOYED

Economic Sector	No. in 1852 Sample	% of Total Sample	No. Employed 1851 Census	% of Total No. Employed
Agriculture	26	3.7	2,260	5.0
Mining	2	0.3	1,512	3.3
Building	34	4.8	3,296	7.3
Manufacturing	247	35.1	22,409	49.5
Transport	7	1.0	2,007	4.4
Dealing	252	35.8	7,937	17.5
Industrial Service	20	2.8	2,899	6.4
Professional	60	8.5	1,896	4.2
Property Owning	22	3.1	678	1.5
Unknown	34	4.8	352	0.8
Total	704	100.0	45,246	99.9

and timber merchants to shopkeepers, those involved in the liquor trade, auctioneers, and commercial travellers. The professional sector also included clergymen and journalists and the property owning classification included mine and quarry owners and 'gentlemen'.

The changing economic composition of the sample during the period 1852-65, excluding the unknown group, is shown in Table IX and only the agricultural and property owning sectors increased their share. Indeed, one would expect that the property owning sector would increase as the sample aged in the thirteen-year period and some voters moved from active participation in the economy to become retired 'gentlemen'. On the other hand the increase in the agricultural sector may have been owed to the longevity of voters in that area as well as some movement from other categories. The building and dealing sectors exhibited a steady decline during the period and possibly some of the loss was the result of reclassification into the property owning category. By 1865, the share of the professional group had increased somewhat but it is more likely that it was the result of the longevity of its members rather than movement from other sectors.

A comparison between the votes cast by the electors in the longitudinal sample and the electorate as a whole is shown in Table X. In his study of one hundred voters during the period 1832-41, Dr. Fraser noted that fifty-six percent remained after the ten years had elapsed.[30] During the period 1852-65 the sample which is under consideration in the present study decreased to less than half (46.6 percent) of its original size and it represented a total of approximately 1,600 or slightly over one quarter (26.6 percent) of the voters in the final election. In Michael Drake's study, fifty (40.7 percent)

TABLE IX

THE CHANGE IN INDUSTRIAL OCCUPATION OF A SAMPLE OF LEEDS ELECTORS

	1852		1857-59		1865	
Economic Sector	No. in Sample	%	No. in Sample	%	No. in Sample	%
Agriculture	26	3.9	27	5.2	18	5.3
Mining	2	0.3	1	0.2	1	0.3
Building	34	5.1	23	4.4	12	3.5
Manufacturing	247	36.9	191	36.9	122	36.0
Transport	7	1.0	3	0.6	3	0.9
Dealing	252	37.6	185	35.8	117	34.5
Industrial Service	20	3.0	13	2.5	10	2.9
Professional	60	9.0	45	8.7	33	9.7
Property Owning	22	3.3	29	5.6	23	6.8
Total	670	100.0	517	100.0	339	100.0

TABLE X

COMPARISON BETWEEN TOTAL VOTES CAST AND VOTES CAST BY SAMPLE

Election	No. of Voters	No. in Sample	Sample as % of Voters	Candidates	Total Votes	%	Sample Votes	%
1852	3,451	704	20.4	Goodman	2,344	(34.1)	466	(33.8)
	(1.99)*	(1.96)*		M.T. Baines	2,311	(33.6)	456	(33.0)
				Hall	1,132	(16.5)	232	(16.8)
				Sidney	1,089	(15.8)	226	(16.4)
					6,876		1,380	
1857	4,361	448	10.3	M.T. Baines	2,329	(34.7)	244	(35.6)
	(1.54)*	(1.53)*		Hall	2,237	(33.3)	209	(30.5)
				Mills	2,143	(31.9)	232	(33.9)
					6,709		685	
1857 Bye	4,134	415	10.0	Beecroft	2,070	(50.1)	197	(47.5)
				Mills	2,064	(49.9)	218	(52.5)
					4,134		415	
1859	4,511	412	9.1	E. Baines	2,343	(33.8)	213	(33.7)
	(1.54)*	(1.53)*		Beecroft	2,302	(33.2)	211	(33.4)
				Forster	2,280	(32.9)	208	(32.9)
					6,925		632	
1865	6,025	328	5.4	Beecroft	3,223	(35.2)	177	(35.8)
	(1.52)*	(1.50)*		E. Baines	3,045	(33.2)	162	(32.7)
				Amberley	2,902	(31.6)	156	(31.5)
					9,170		495	

*Average number of votes cast per voter.

of the 1852 sample of 123 electors cast a vote in 1865.[31] Edward Baines calculated, in 1855, that one tenth of the borough constituency was new each year.[32] Whether or not he had assessed accurately the magnitude of changes to the parliamentary register of voters, this study shows that approximately seventy-three percent of those voting in 1865 had not voted in the election held thirteen years earlier and suggests an average change in the electorate of approximately 5.6 percent per annum.

The number in the sample was reduced from 704 in 1852 to 328 in 1865, but these statistics do not reveal the complete picture because only 223 of the group who voted in 1865 had actually used their suffrages in all five elections. Obviously some of the electors had not voted in one or more of the elections held after 1852, and an analysis of the sample shows that 131 voters (18.6 percent of the original sample) missed one of the elections after 1852 but participated at a subsequent election. Details of the participation of voters in the five elections are in Table XI and show, for example, that while 177 electors are recorded as having voted in only one election, therefore, theoretically leaving 527 of the original sample available to vote in the second election, only 448 actually voted. In the final election there were theoretically only 223 electors available to participate, since that was the number of voters who made use of their suffrage in every election, but over one hundred more actually voted.

The discrepancy between the percentage of the actual number of votes cast for the candidates in 1852 with the percentage of votes which they gained in the sample is rather puzzling and suggests that either the number of votes declared for each candidate on polling day

TABLE XI

PARTICIPATION OF VOTERS

No. of Elections	Frequency of Voter Participation	Potential No. Available Election Year		No.	Actual Voters
1	177	1852			704
2	60	1857	704-177	= 527	448
3	81	1857(B)	704-(177+ 60)	= 467	415
4	163	1859	704-(237+ 81)	= 386	412
5	223	1865	704-(318+163)	= 223	328
Total Voters	704				

was inaccurate or that the pollbook contains inaccuracies. Certainly the figures announced for the candidates on polling day are not consistent with the results which are derived from the addition of the votes recorded for them in the pollbook:

	Votes Cast	
	Declaration	Addition in Pollbook
Goodman	2,344	2,315
M.T. Baines	2,311	2,276
Hall	1,132	1,106
Sidney	1,089	1,062
Total	6,876	6,759

However, it is clear in Table X that, for the 1852 election at least, the rank order resulting from the votes cast by those in the sample reflects the rank order which results from the votes cast by the electorate as a whole. On the other hand there are marked differences between the votes of those in the sample and those of the total electorate in both of the elections in 1857. The sample placed Hall at the bottom of the poll in the general election and gave more votes to Mills than Beecroft in the bye-election. Clearly 1857 was a significant year as far as the members of the sample group are concerned and Table XI shows that seventy-nine fewer voters participated in the general election than might have been expected. In the bye-election the difference was reduced to fifty-two voters. There is a closer similarity between the votes of the members of the longitudinal sample and the total electorate in 1859 whereas in the final election the sample appears to have given the Conservative candidate more support than the electorate as a whole. Perhaps the 'movement' of the sample group from some industrial sectors to others, which was noted in Table IX, is reflected in the way votes were allocated in the final election. T.J. Nossiter has identified the shopkeeper class (members of the Dealing sector) as a strong source of Liberal support[33] and it is the Dealing sector which shows a steady decline in terms of its share of the sample group. Certainly the two percent swing of the the sample group from the leading Liberal in 1859 to the Conservative candidate in 1865 was greater than the one percent swing of the electorate as a whole.

During the course of the five elections the electors could have cast a maximum of nine votes if they had participated in each election. A summary of the overall number of votes cast by electors in the sample is presented in Table XII while information which is more significant in terms of voter loyalty is shown in Table XIII. For example, Table XII shows that ninety-three electors cast the maximum number of votes but does not identify how the votes are distributed between the parties. The following table, however, reveals that seventy-six electors gave all nine votes to Liberal candidates and that there were sixty-six electors who used their votes in the five elections only in support of Conservative candidates. Conversely 202 electors did not cast any vote for the Liberals while 336 members of the sample never voted in favour of a Conservative candidate. Therefore, if 538 voters did not cross party lines, a total of 166 voters (23.6 percent) must have done so. This result is extremely significant since it shows a lower level of party loyalty than had been expected. In his study of a sample of one hundred electors during the period 1832-41 Dr. Fraser determined that ten percent of the voters were politically mobile

TABLE XII

VOTES CAST IN FIVE ELECTIONS

No. of Votes Cast	No. of Voters	Percentage of Voters
9	93	13.2
8	30	4.3
7	86	12.2
6	124	17.6
5	98	13.9
4	66	9.4
3	28	4.0
2	167	23.7
1	12	1.7
Total	704	100.0

TABLE XIII

VOTES CAST FOR PARTIES

Liberal Party			Conservative Party		
No. of Votes Cast In Favour	No. of Voters	% of Total	No. of Votes Cast In Favour	No. of Voters	% of Total
0	202	28.7	0	336	47.7
1	39	5.5	1	71	10.1
2	145	20.6	2	83	11.8
3	36	5.1	3	38	5.4
4	44	6.3	4	45	6.4
5	40	5.7	5	65	9.2
6	28	4.0	6	66	9.4
7	62	8.8			
8	32	4.5			
9	76	10.8			
	704	100.0		704	100.0

enough to switch parties.[34] This study shows a similar fraction (11.2 percent) in that category but a better gauge of party loyalty is to add those who switched their allegiance between elections to those who split within elections. Perhaps the large (51.6 percent) cross-party vote in the Leeds election of 1847[35] had an impact on party loyalty in subsequent elections.

Like its predecessor, however, Table XIII still presents a general overview of the way in which voters allocated 3,607 votes in the course of five elections. Apart from the 1857 bye-election, when each elector had only one vote, crosstabulations were carried out for the elections held in the period 1852-65, to determine how voters allocated their votes. A summary of the results is shown in Table XIV; the term 'straight' denotes that an elector cast both votes for candidates in the same party, voters 'plumped' when they voted for only one candidate, and electors who 'split' their vote gave their votes to one candidate from each party. After 1852 the Conservatives fielded only one candidate and probably many Conservative 'plumpers' would have voted 'straight' Conservative had they been given the opportunity. An analysis of the overall number of split voters is shown in the eighth column. My calculations differ somewhat from the overall results calculated by Dr. Fraser.[36] It appears that in 1852 and 1865 the sample tended to vote across party lines to a greater extent than the electorate as a whole but that during the elections of 1857 and 1859 they tended to be more loyal to one party than was the total electorate.

From Table XIV it is clear that during the course of four general elections there were ninety-eight occasions when split votes occurred within an election. Of that total, seventy-eight voters split their

TABLE XIV

SUMMARY OF VOTING PATTERN IN FIVE ELECTIONS

Election	Liberal Straights	Conservative Straights	Liberal Plumpers	Conservative Plumpers	Split Votes	Split as % of Total	Overall Split	Total Voters
1852	444	214	16	12	18	2.6	2.1	704
1857	203	—	36	175	34	7.6	9.0	448
1857 Bye	—	—	218	197	—	—	—	415
1859	193	—	8	184	27	6.6	7.9	412
1865	148	—	3	158	19	5.8	4.3	328
Total	988 (42.8%)	214 (9.3%)	281 (12.2%)	726 (31.5%)	98 (4.3%)			2,307 (100.0%)

votes once, another seven voters split their votes twice and there were two electors who split their votes at three elections. In other words eighty-seven voters were responsible for ninety-eight splits.

Members of a second group changed their allegiance between elections. Their number, of course, is derived from the difference between the total of 166 who are known to have voted across party lines during the course of the five elections (see Table XIII) and the eighty-seven individuals who split their votes within an election. Of the group of seventy-nine voters who changed parties between elections fifty-three electors (67.1 percent) left their original party and did not return, twenty-three voters eventually returned to vote for their original party and three voters changed party allegiance three times. This study has shown that approximately half of the 'disloyalty' to parties was the result of voters who split within elections (52.4 percent) and nearly half was the result of a voter changing his preference between elections.

The two groups - "within splits" and "between splits" - have been allocated to the wards in which they voted in the 1852 election. From the results, which are shown in Table XV, it appears that Mill Hill, Chapel Allerton, and Holbeck voters were reasonably loyal to their parties since their share of the percentage of within and between split votes was lower than their share of the electorate. Other wards - Kirkgate, North, North West, Beeston, Potternewton, and Wortley - appear to have had a group of voters who tended to split within elections but to have been less likely to change parties between elections. The North East, South, West, Armley, Bramley, and Hunslet wards, on the other hand, appear to have had more than their share of voters who left

TABLE XV

CROSS PARTY VOTING BY WARD

Ward	% of 1852 Electorate		% of Total Within Splits		% of Total Between Splits	
East	4.3		11.5		7.6	
Kirkgate	8.8		10.3		8.9	
Mill Hill 1	5.1	14.1	6.9	13.8	3.8	7.6
Mill Hill 2	9.0		6.9		3.8	
North	7.3		9.2		6.3	
North East	4.6		2.3		5.1	
North West	7.7		9.2		5.1	
South	5.5		3.4		7.6	
West 1	5.0	16.2	2.3	9.1	6.3	17.7
West 2	8.0		3.4		10.1	
West 3	3.2		3.4		1.3	
Armley	2.1		1.1		2.5	
Beeston	1.2		2.3		1.3	
Bramley	6.5		4.6		12.7	
Chapel Allerton	2.2		2.3		0.0	
Headingley	1.0		3.4		3.8	
Holbeck	3.9		2.3		3.8	
Hunslet	6.5		8.0		7.6	
Potternewton	1.5		3.4		0.0	
Wortley	2.8		3.4		2.5	

their original party at some time during the elections. Each of the three different groupings which have been suggested contains both Leeds township and out township wards. In Table XVI the voters are arranged within their economic sectors, again as they were allocated for the 1852 election. Those in the Property Owning and Professional sectors appear to have had a greater tendency to split their votes than those in other sectors whereas those in the Dealing and Industrial Service sectors appear to have been both less likely to sit on the fence and less likely to change parties than their share of the 1852 sample would indicate. The small Mining and Building sectors obviously contained individuals who were more likely to change parties between elections.

Finally, it is important to know what the net result of the changes in voting preferences was in terms of the political parties. The analysis of the two groups - "within splits" and "between splits" - reveals, once again, that 1857 was a crucial year. Of the eighty-seven electors who split their votes within elections, eight voted Liberal in 1852, split their votes in the general election of March 1857 and voted Conservative thereafter. In addition, two electors who had split their votes in 1852 and 1857 switched their allegiance permanently to the Conservatives in the June 1857 bye-election. In total ten voters in the "within split" group were lost permanently to the Liberals as the result of decisions made in 1857. There were another eight electors who voted consistently for the Liberal candidates except for a split vote in the general election of 1857.

Twenty-one of the seventy-nine in the "between split" group switched allegiance from the Liberal party to vote Conservative both in the general election of 1857 and in subsequent elections. Another four

TABLE XVI

CROSS PARTY VOTING BY ECONOMIC SECTORS

Sector	% of 1852 Electorate	% of Total Within Splits	% of Total Between Splits
Agriculture	3.7	2.3	3.8
Mining	0.3	0.0	1.3
Building	4.8	2.3	7.6
Manufacturing	35.1	32.2	36.7
Transport	1.0	1.1	1.3
Dealing	35.8	32.2	30.4
Industrial Service	2.8	2.3	2.5
Professional	8.5	11.5	7.6
Property Owning	3.1	9.2	3.8
Unknown	4.8	6.9	5.1

Liberals voted for the Conservatives in March 1857, but did not vote after that election. Six voters made the change in the bye-election and continued to support the Conservatives in the fourth and fifth elections while five others switched to the Conservatives in June 1857 but did not vote again.

In summary, thirty-seven voters in the "within" and "between" groups changed their allegiance permanently from the Liberals to the Conservatives during the elections of 1857. They voted in subsequent elections and so it is possible to confirm their commitment. Another nine electors who changed their minds in 1857 did not vote in the elections of 1859 and 1865. The total of forty-six voters represents approximately ten percent of the total of those in the sample who voted in the 1857 elections.

Only four of the fifty-three voters in the "between split" group who changed party allegiance once left the Conservatives to join the Liberals. However, of the twenty-three electors who changed their minds twice, thirteen rejoined the Liberals. Those who had the greatest tendency to split within elections came from the woollen industry with five of the nine electors who split their votes in more than one election belonging to that group.

VII

Some inferences, which are based upon the results of the longitudinal study, have been made about occupational groups in preceding sections of this chapter. Nevertheless a second, yet separate, analysis of voting behaviour has been undertaken in which as many voters as possible have been identified for a limited number of occupations. This somewhat exhaustive approach is intended to avoid two possible pitfalls. In the first place a systematic sample which is used to infer a correlation between occupation and voting would not take account of a concentration of, for example, beersellers in one ward. Secondly, a study which was carried out by J.R. Vincent of the correlation between shoemakers and their voting preferences has been criticized because he restricted his sample to those voters whose surnames began with letters in the first part of the alphabet only.[37]

The groups which have been selected for the occupational study reflect, to some extent, those chosen by Dr. Fraser for his study of occupation and voting behaviour in the period 1832-41.[38] Like Fraser, doctors and lawyers have been selected to represent the upper and professional group and the manufacturing group is represented by woolstaplers, wool merchants, and engineers. The present study, however, omits flax spinners from the manufacturing group and while Fraser selected hatters and curriers to represent the retail and craft interests, grocers and tea dealers, and boot and shoemakers are used here. In addition, two groups have been chosen to represent the drink interest - the hotel, inn, and tavern keepers form one group and the beerhouse keepers are in the other.

Details of the study are provided in Table XVII. The doctors and lawyers remained strong Conservative supporters but, in comparison to the period 1832-41, they had a greater tendency to split their votes in the period under investigation in this study. For example, seven percent was the greatest split vote which occurred among the doctors in the period 1832-41 but it was the lowest figure in the period 1852-65. Dr. Fraser found no evidence of split voting in the lawyers' group in

TABLE XVII

OCCUPATION AND VOTING

A. Medical Profession

		Percentage		
Year	Sample	Liberal	Conservative	Split
1852	43	37.2	55.8	7.0
1857	48	27.0	54.2	18.8
1857 Bye	45	24.4	75.6	0.0
1859	46	15.2	71.7	13.0
1865	53	15.1	75.5	9.4

B. Legal Profession

		Percentage		
Year	Sample	Liberal	Conservative	Split
1852	39	30.8	66.6	2.5
1857	52	30.8	46.2	23.1
1857 Bye	52	17.3	82.7	0.0
1859	64	21.9	70.3	7.8
1865	63	22.2	68.3	9.5

TABLE XVII-Continued

C. Woolstaplers and Woolmerchants

		Percentage		
Year	Sample	Liberal	Conservative	Split
1852	66	71.2	28.8	0.0
1857	147	53.0	37.4	9.5
1857 Bye	116	44.0	56.0	0.0
1859	126	44.4	47.6	7.9
1865	135	53.4	43.0	3.7

D. Engineering

		Percentage		
Year	Sample	Liberal	Conservative	Split
1852	21	52.4	47.6	0.0
1857	50	68.0	24.0	8.0
1857 Bye	44	61.4	38.6	0.0
1859	57	61.4	28.1	10.5
1865	60	51.7	36.7	11.7

TABLE XVII-Continued

E. Boot and Shoemakers

		Percentage		
Year	Sample	Liberal	Conservative	Split
1852	43	79.0	18.6	2.3
1857	57	71.9	19.3	8.8
1857 Bye	50	68.0	32.0	0.0
1859	42	73.8	16.7	9.5
1865	84	63.1	33.3	3.6

F. Grocers and Teadealers

		Percentage		
Year	Sample	Liberal	Conservative	Split
1852	53	75.5	20.8	3.8
1857	84	69.0	25.0	6.0
1857 Bye	79	70.9	29.1	0.0
1859	82	65.9	24.4	9.8
1865	98	58.1	38.8	3.1

TABLE XVII-Continued

G. Hotel, Inn and Tavern Keepers

		Percentage		
Year	Sample	Liberal	Conservative	Split
1852	112	51.7	45.6	2.7
1857	162	27.1	68.5	4.3
1857 Bye	142	32.4	67.6	0.0
1859	142	26.7	61.3	12.0
1865	168	19.1	74.4	6.5

H. Beerhouse Keepers

		Percentage		
Year	Sample	Liberal	Conservative	Split
1852	67	73.1	25.4	1.5
1857	120	16.7	75.0	8.3
1857 Bye	107	22.4	77.6	0.0
1859	133	26.3	58.6	15.0
1865	158	18.4	74.7	6.9

any of the five elections which he investigated but splitting among that group reached twenty-three percent in the election of March 1857, and occurred, to a lesser extent, in the three other general elections held between 1852 and 1865. The woolstaplers' and wool merchants' group became more Conservative in the period 1852-65 and on two occasions favoured George Beecroft with more votes than his Liberal opponents. Those involved in engineering maintained their allegiance to the Liberal party although, like the professional groups and the woolstaplers and wool mechants, they showed a greater tendency to split their votes than they had in the period 1832-41.

With respect to the 'new' categories, the boot and shoemakers and the grocers and tea dealers were clearly strong supporters of the Liberal party. Dr. Vincent's analysis of the Leeds election of 1834 reveals that both groups gave most of their support to the Liberals although he based his calculations only on electors whose surnames started with the letters A to M inclusive.[39] While the publicans and beersellers tended to be more Conservative than Liberal in 1834 - especially in Leeds township - both groups gave most of their support to the Liberals in 1852. There was, however, a spectacular reversal of allegiance in the 1857 general election and both groups continued to be strong supporters of the Conservative party for the elections held during the rest of the period.

Twenty years ago, J.R. Vincent presented evidence that the drink interest acted as a unit in the 1857 election in Rochdale but he did not discover a similar pattern in several other towns which he investigated. He suggested, therefore, that it was only the rare Liberal candidate who fell foul of the liquor trade prior to the liquor legislation of 1869-72.[40] In Leeds the Liberals lost the support of the liquor interest not so much on account of hostility towards a Liberal candidate - Edward Baines, after all, did not contest the borough until 1859 - but rather from fear of potential Liberal legislation and in reaction to the activities of the local temperance advocates who were clearly supporters of the Liberal party.

T.J. Nossiter has calculated that seven percent of the Leeds electorate between 1832 and 1866 belonged to the drink trade.[41] From the number of those identified in the publican and beerhouse keeper groups for the occupational study it is evident that those two groups alone formed, on average, 5.8 percent of the electors who voted in the period 1852-65. If the evidence available from the longitudinal study is used and maltsters, brewers, and wine merchants are included, then the share of the electorate which is held by the drink interest increases to nearly ten percent for the 1852 election.

An examination of the pattern of the split voting characteristics of the occupational groups shows that while the professional and woollen industry categories experienced the greatest tendency to split in 1857, the craft, retail, and drink interest showed that tendency two years later. It is not strange that the legal profession should exhibit such divided loyalties in 1857 since M.T. Baines and Robert Hall were both barristers and so twelve of the fifty-two lawyers simply voted for their colleagues. It is possible that professional considerations also affected the medical group since eight of the forty-eight who voted selected Baines and Hall as their choices.

Perhaps Edward Baines' retreat in 1859, from his earlier advocacy of restricting the opening hours of public houses and his attempt to disassociate himself from the temperance movement, caused the increase in split voting in the drink interest in the 1859 election. No evidence has been discovered which would help to explain the increase in split voting of the craft and retail groups in 1859.

VIII

The longitudinal analysis of a group of mid-nineteenth century Leeds electors shows that party loyalty and voter participation were disrupted by events in the elections held in 1857. There are, however, two pieces of conflicting evidence about the actions of those in the sample. In the first place it has been shown that seventy-nine (15.0 percent) of the 527 in the sample who should, theoretically, have been available to vote in the March 1857 election did not vote. Secondly, while those in the sample who did participate tended to vote more for the Liberals than the electorate as a whole, there was also a decisive movement away from the Liberal party in terms of those who split votes or changed parties between elections. The evidence precludes generalization but serves as a re-affirmation of T.J. Nossiter's statement that split voting "is an important aspect of nineteenth century politics which has been neglected by historians writing tidy accounts of the development of party in English politics".[42] At any event, the longitudinal study has shown that nearly twenty-four percent of the sample chose to split their support for parties either within an election or between elections.

While the longitudinal analysis was dynamic in the sense that it followed a group of electors during a period of thirteen years it was static in the sense that no replacements were added. On the other hand the occupational analysis was static because the same group was investigated at each of five elections but membership in the group changed and so there was a dynamic element to the study. Few surprises, however, were discovered in the occupational analysis apart from the increased tendency towards split voting in the period and the sudden reversal of the voting behaviour of the drink interest which occurred in 1857. Leeds' publicans, at least, were quite clear about which party would best serve their interests. One must conclude, though, from the evidence produced by the two studies that Leeds' electors as a whole were less certain and, therefore, less likely to show unswerving loyalty to a party, than they appear to have been willing to do in the period 1832-41.

[1] Edward Baines served as president of the Economic Science and Statistics section of the British Association when it met in Leeds in September 1858, and he made the comment during his address to the members of the section.

[2] For details of the capabilities of the SPSS system of programmes see Norman H. Nie et al., SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, 2 ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 1975).

[3] George Rudé, "The Middlesex Electors of 1768-1769," English Historical Review 75 (October 1960): 601-617.

[4] John Cannon, "Poll Books," History 47 (1962): 166-169. J.R. Vincent, Pollbooks: How Victorians Voted, (Cambridge University Press, 1967).

[5] Thomas J. Nossiter, "Recent Work on English Elections, 1832-1935," Political Studies 18 (1970): 528.

[6] W.A. Speck and W.A. Gray, "Computer Analysis of Poll Books: An Initial Report," Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research 43 (1970): 105-112.

[7] W.A. Speck, W.A. Gray, and R. Hopkinson, "Computer Analysis of Poll Books: A Further Report," Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research 48 (1975): 64-90.

[8] Michael Drake, "The Mid-Victorian Voter," Journal of Interdisciplinary History 1 (1971): 473-490.

[9] Fraser, "Politics in Leeds," pp. 521-522.

[10] The three pollbooks appear to have been printed by adherents of the Liberal party. David Green, the bookseller, printed that issued for the 1859 election.

[11] They were tenth and eleventh on a list of twelve. See Fraser, Urban Politics, p. 219.

[12] Leeds Mercury, 22 October 1857.

[13] In 1855, for example, Edward Baines calculated that there were at least 1,000 duplicates on a register of 6,557 electors. Leeds Mercury, 13 October 1855.

[14] Notes of Edward Baines, Baines MSS 57, Leeds City Archives and Evidence of Edward Baines before the House of Lords Select Committee on the Elective Franchise in Counties and Boroughs, 4 June 1860, paragraph 3413.

[15] Parliamentary Papers 1866, Return of Several Cities and Boroughs in England and Wales on the Proportion of Electors Belonging to the Working Classes on the Register. Cited in Michael Drake, *Introduction to Historical Psephology*, (Open University Press, 1974), pp. 135-139. Coventry headed the list with 69.8 percent. Manchester (27.0 percent), Sheffield (26.0 percent), Birmingham (19.2 percent), and Liverpool (13.0 percent) were all ahead of Leeds.

[16] For example in 1853 the burgess roll was 17,916 and in 1854 it was 21,126. *Leeds Intelligencer*, 9 September 1854.

[17] Brian Barber, "Municipal Government in Leeds, 1835-1914," in *Municipal Reform and the Industrial City*, ed. Derek Fraser, (Leicester University Press, 1982), p. 105.

[18] Fraser, "Politics in Leeds," p. 392.

[19] Ibid., p. 490.

[20] *Leeds Express*, 8 July 1865. The newspaper also reported that a committee of fifteen Conservative ladies had been formed to make daily calls on shopkeepers in Leeds. This information, together with the inclusion of Lady Amberley on the platform at two of the meetings held for Liberal electors, indicates that women were being allowed to play a part in the parliamentary politics of the borough.

[21] See R.S. Schofield, "Sampling in Historial Research," in *Nineteenth Century Society*, ed. E.A. Wrigley, (Cambridge University Press, 1972), pp. 153-154. See also Michael Drake, ed. *The Quantitative Analysis of Historical Data*, (Open University Press, 1974), pp. 35-44.

[22] T.J. Nossiter, "Aspects of Electoral Behaviour in English Constituencies, 1832-1868," in *Mass Politics*, eds. Erik Allardt and Stein Rokkan, (New York: Free Press, 1970), p. 169.

[23] See P.M. Tillott, "Sources of Inaccuracy in the 1851 and 1861 Census," in *Nineteenth Century Society*, ed. E.A. Wrigley, pp. 82-133. Census night was 7 April 1851 and the return was supposed to be based on the number of people spending the night in the household.

[24] T.J. Nossiter, "Voting Behaviour 1832-1872," *Political Studies* 18 (1970): 383. He reports mean voter age as forty for Bradford and Gateshead and forty-six for Hull.

[25] Dillon, "Irish in Leeds," p. 2.

[26] Fraser, *Urban Politics*, p. 219.

[27] See above, footnote 15.

[28] See Michael B. Katz, "Occupational Classification in History," Journal of Interdisciplinary History 3 (1972-73): 63-88. Katz developed a structural classification for the occupations of inhabitants of Hamilton, Ontario in 1852.

[29] W.A. Armstrong, "The Use of Information About Occupation," in Nineteenth Century Society, ed. E.A. Wrigley, pp. 191-310. Armstrong based his proposal on a scheme suggested by the social reformer Charles Booth in 1886.

[30] Fraser, "Politics in Leeds," p. 522.

[31] Drake, "Mid-Victorian Voter," p. 482.

[32] Leeds Mercury, 13 October 1855.

[33] Nossiter, "Aspects of Electoral Behaviour," p. 171.

[34] Fraser, "Politics in Leeds," p. 522.

[35] Ibid., p. 393.

[36] Ibid., Fraser's calculations are: 1852-2.15, 1857-8.99, 1859-7.17, 1865-4.55. T.J. Nossiter has published a table of cross-party voting in the six Northern counties in "Aspects of Electoral Behaviour," p. 164. Leeds had a low split vote when compared with nearly all the other boroughs in the sample.

[37] Drake, Historical Psephology, pp. 72-73 and R.S. Neale, Class and Ideology in the Nineteenth Century, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), pp. 67-69.

[38] Fraser, Urban Politics, pp. 228-230.

[39] Vincent, Pollbooks, pp. 122-123.

[40] J.R. Vincent, "The Electoral Sociology of Rochdale,"Economic History Review 16 (1963-64): 77-78.

[41] Thomas J. Nossiter, Influence, Opinion and Political Idioms in Reformed England, (Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1975), p. 166.

[42] Nossiter, "Aspects of Electoral Behaviour," p. 166.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

> Prosperity does not make half so much noise in the world as adversity . . . . The happiest periods in a nation's progress are often those which make the least figure in history.
>
> Leeds Times, 16 November 1850

I

Dr. Fraser reasoned that 1852 was a suitable year to end his study of politics in Leeds because it marked "the end of an age of social and political conflict and the beginning of the mid-Victorian 'age of equipoise'".[1] The "stunning" victory of the Liberals in the parliamentary election of that year had made Leeds "appear the safe Liberal seat which reformers had always assumed it would be". Appearances were, however, deceptive. Liberal ascendancy had been achieved due to the shortcomings of their opponents and it was broken once the Leeds Conservatives had become organized again.

Even in the 'age of equipoise' parliamentary elections were always contested in Leeds. In an analysis of nineteenth century British elections it has been determined that prior to the Second Reform Act approximately half the seats were uncontested and that a large number of double member constituencies returned a member from each party without a contest.[3] While the final result was usually no different in Leeds, enough party feeling remained in the mid-nineteenth century for electors to go to the trouble and expense of an election contest. Whereas Leeds' municipal politics provide occasional evidence of compromise, balance, and co-operation, an "attitude of good feeling"[4], which, in some parliamentary constituencies, was translated into an equitable division of the representation, was not sufficient to effect a truce in the metropolis of the West Riding.

One historian has suggested a causal link between contested elections and the inability of election managers to predict the outcome of a prospective contest.[5] By that criterion Leeds should have been a borough in which contests were normally avoided because, in spite of the post-election recriminations which wracked the 'party of all shades', the results for most elections were really not a surprise. Even in the final election of the period, after an hiatus of six years, the result was forecast with commendable accuracy by the Conservatives and conceded, in private, by the Liberals. Furthermore, each party had an agent to guard the registration of its supporters for municipal and parliamentary elections throughout the period. The store of knowledge which had been accumulated since the enfranchisement of the borough, especially with respect to the relatively small group of parliamentary electors, gave parties a reasonable indication of their probable fortunes at the polls.

By fielding only one candidate in the general elections which were held after 1852, Leeds Conservatives showed that they were prepared to share the representation of the constituency. It was also indicative, perhaps, of the party's implicit recognition of its weaker position in Leeds. Party managers cannot have been unaware of Cox and Grady's dictum that in a two-member constituency

> a third man, standing alone; has far better chances of success than running two against two, unless the whole party is numerically greater and could secure more than half of the whole constituency, if the contest were an even fight between one and one 6

On the other hand, the Conservative candidate always had to labour under the disadvantage that the main body of his support must consist of plumpers. As Cox and Grady pointed out, a solitary candidate might find it difficult to retain the plumping vote "against an active enemy tempting by the modest request 'for one vote only'".[7] One must conclude not only that Leeds Conservatives were able to return their candidate because of the disunity of their opponents but also that they were skillful in getting a strong commitment from their own supporters. The longitudinal study of electors has confirmed that Conservatives tended to remain more loyal to their party than Liberals. An analysis of the overall voting pattern in the general elections of 1857, 1859, and 1865 shows that the plumping vote for the Conservative candidate increased from forty-two percent to forty-eight percent of the voters and that split voting decreased from nine percent of the voters to less than half that figure. In contrast, the straight Liberal vote increased only from forty-four percent to forty-five percent of voters. Clearly Leeds electors continued to distinguish between the parties in the mid-nineteenth century and while the term 'Liberal-Conservative' might have been used to describe George Beecroft it was obviously not a label which was expected to translate into split votes at the polling stations. The inaction at Westminster which tended to blur party lines did not affect the perceptions of party held by Leeds parliamentary electors.

II

Distaste for events in local elections, quarrels started in the sphere of municipal political contests, and victories achieved in local elections had an impact on the struggle to return representatives to Parliament. In 1852, the Poor Law Board's inquiry into the election of the Guardians of Leeds township had a deleterious impact on Conservative morale. The struggle between the Liberals and Chartists in municipal politics and the attempt of town council to disband the Board of Highway Surveyors resulted in the establishment of a party of 'advanced Liberals' which tried to nominate their own candidate under the Liberal umbrella in the 1857 elections. Liberal humiliation at the party's failure to gain control of the Board of Guardians in 1858 resulted in an overhaul of party organization in the wards and a vigorous campaign just prior to the parliamentary election in the following year. Leeds, like the other ninety English boroughs which had identical municipal and parliamentary boundaries, appears to have used the same electoral machinery at both the local and national level of politics.[8] For a "Liberal Elector" the reason for the ascendancy of the Conservatives in 1865 had something to do with the fact that "there are people calling themselves Liberal who would make municipal power a scourge on the town".[9] There was, however, one important difference between municipal and parliamentary elections; bribery and corruption, which was almost a regular feature of elections in some wards for local elections was, apparently, not a feature of contests to return representatives to Westminster. Details of the bribery used in the election of town councillors and the corruption in Guardians' elections have been discussed already but the absence of bribery in Leeds parliamentary elections has been noted more by the omission of reference to it rather than a positive statement about its absence. Since both parties were quick to reveal the transgressions of their opponents in local elections the lack of any comments with respect to parliamentary elections must be taken as evidence too. Personation by one or two voters in the 1857 bye-election appears to have been the only indication of illegal practices.[10] In general, therefore, one must conclude that the Leeds Times was accurate with its claim that

> Leeds has always been a pattern place . . . the electors have never fallen into temptation - that they have always spurned the idea of selling their votes for 'the best returns and brandy'.[11]

The opinion was shared by Robert Meek Carter who believed Leeds to be "one of the purest constituencies in the kingdom".[12]

To contemporaries it seemed strange that a strong link did not exist between municipal and parliamentary politics in the borough. Sir Michael Hicks Beach, a member of the Select Committee on Parliamentary and Municipal Elections, expected that municipal bribery in Leeds was carried out "with an ultimate view to the Parliamentary election". Alderman Robert Addyman, however, suggested that the bribery took place "for the immediate advantage of getting into the corporation". In response to a query from another member of the Committee, Addyman confirmed that "it is no use bribing in Leeds for the Parliamentary election".[13] Although the parliamentary electorate was smaller and, therefore, potentially more liable to succumb to bribery, it had, of course, a different composition from the municipal electorate. The low percentage of working class voters may offer an explanation of the absence of corruption. In addition, if the bribery in local contests could be attributed partly to the fact that parties were balanced within a ward then the same rationale should have prevailed for the parliamentary elections in the borough.[14] During the course of the five contests, the leading candidates from each party were within five votes of each other - on three occasions the candidates tied. In another twelve wards the leading candidates were within ten votes of each other. Once again, a factor which should have promoted bribery evidently did not.[15]

The struggle for supremacy in the Riding between Wakefield, the traditional 'county' town, and Leeds, the thriving commercial and political centre, helped, possibly, to foster the purity of parliamentary elections in the metropolis. When both the Liberal and Conservative candidates in the Wakefield election of 1859 were charged with bribing electors the Leeds Times crowed

> There has long been an odour of something very different from purity or sanctity about our ancient neighbour.[16]

When the Riding Probate Court was established in Wakefield rather than Leeds the loss was taken badly and the rivalry between the two towns was maintained throughout most of the period due to the competition to secure the West Riding Assizes. Civic pride among a group of parliamentary electors, which was predominantly middle class, may have been another factor which kept Leeds free from election misdemeanours.

III

The Leeds Mercury found it perfectly natural "that the combinations which were formed for Parliamentary elections should be adopted in municipal elections". According to the Liberal journal, the basis of party organization was not found easily in municipal questions because in Leeds and most other towns there was "no one prominent municipal object of great public interest for or against which two different parties . . . (could) rally". Therefore, given that there was "an instinct which will have party organization in some form or other" the basis for party in municipal politics had to be found in political rather than municipal differences. A political Liberal, the newspaper suggested, would be a reformer in the corporation while a political Conservative would be an opponent of reform.[17] Nevertheless, in spite of the Mercury's pronouncements, there were signs that while parties may have fulfilled a function with respect to the selection of candidates for town council there were some anomalies. It was Conservative councillor William St. James Wheelhouse who fought, unsuccessfully, to establish a free library in the town and Conservative councillor Edward Bishop, a medical doctor, led the struggle to improve the system for the removal of 'night soil'. One historian has concluded that by the mid-1850s the municipal administration of Leeds had run into "the sands of incompetence".[18] By 1864, the Liberal aldermen and town councillors who had been elected, presumably for their liberal political opinions, were clearly not sympathetic to an extension of the parliamentary franchise.

The raison d'etre of politics in the early nineteenth century endured, it appears, as a myth in the mid-century years. While party feeling was strong in the twenty years after the First Reform Act because "issues could be seen in terms of party ideology"[19] the reality of politics in the period 1852-65 was somewhat different. By the middle of the century, Liberal hegemony on the town council had become well established. The Conservatives proved willing to support Liberal candidates against Chartists. Perhaps they recognized the impossibility of returning their own candidate in some wards but the strategy was more likely recognition that a Conservative candidate would have had the effect of healing the Liberal - Chartist breach. Later, the Conservatives were even able to reach an accommodation with Liberals in some wards. The truce which was established on those occasions was tacit recognition that the 'best man' would not necessarily be returned as a result of the functioning of the party system. Indeed, one suspects that the momentum for party politics was, at times, being sustained by party workers at the ward level. Those who were employed in the distribution of bribes and the personation of voters probably looked upon the elections for councillors and Guardians as an annual source of income. Clearly, leaders in both parties were disturbed by the practice of corruption and by the calibre of the representatives who were returned as the result of its employment. Given the frequency of elections at the local level and an economic climate which diverted the attention of potential community leaders away from involvement in municipal politics it is not surprising that corruption became systemic in some wards. J.R. Vincent has concluded that there was a greater gulf between the top and bottom of political life within a constituency than between local party heads and the national leadership.[20] Evidence obtained from municipal political activity in Leeds appears to support his assertion.

IV

Leeds' newspapers have been prominent in this study due to the need to rely primarily upon them as sources of information. This emphasis has not been inappropriate given the links between the Leeds Mercury and two of the town's Liberal MPs, the connection between Alderman Carter and the Leeds Express and the strong commitment of the Leeds Intelligencer to the Conservative cause. Furthermore, the political involvement of employees of the press shows that the newspapers were active in their support of political parties and not merely organs of opinion. John Beckwith, the clerk to the Board of Guardians, had been a reporter for the Leeds Intelligencer. George Beckwith, who was prosecuted for his involvement in proxy forgeries was a clerk in the office of the Conservative newspaper and Edwin Batley, secretary of the Conservative Working Men's Association, was a compositor. On the Liberal side Elihu Finnie and William Hickes of the Leeds Working Men's Parliamentary Reform Association were Leeds Mercury compositors. When the Holbeck Liberals invaded a ward meeting of George Beecroft's supporters in the 1859 election they were led by William Coxon, a clerk in the Mercury office.[21]

Information obtained from the 1851 census reveals that Edward Baines employed forty-one hands and the Conservative publisher had thirty employees. In terms of the census sample which was discussed in the previous chapter, they were substantial employers. According to the census return, the Liberal editor had three servants while Kemplay employed a governess and three servants. Their situation compared favourably with the group of electors who were identified in the census sample.

V

After the Second Reform Act, the Leeds electorate increased to 37,510[22] and the town was allocated an extra parliamentary seat. Edward Baines was returned at the head of the poll in the 1868 general election with Robert Meek Carter elected as the second Liberal. George Beecroft retired and William St. James Wheelhouse replaced him as the Conservative member. In 1874, Baines failed in his bid for re-election to a fourth term. He listed thirteen causes for his defeat in a letter to his brother-in-law[23] and felt himself the victim of an anti-Government vote. It is also probable, though, that Baines fell victim to groups which opposed him personally. He had incurred the displeasure of publicans and brewers, permissive bill supporters, and Catholics in previous elections; his support of Forster's Elementary Education Act in 1870 undoubtedly cost him the support of Nonconformists.[24] In addition, Baines noted the opposition of "trade unionists" and workmen: two groups enfranchised in 1867 which included, no doubt, those who had dubbed the Leeds Mercury "the bitter organ of the coal masters' interest" during the miners' strike of 1863.[25]

Baines lost another power base when the LWMPRA was dissolved in 1866 and was replaced by the Leeds Manhood Suffrage Association under the leadership of Alderman Carter. When the Leeds Liberal Association was formed in 1876 it was controlled, initially, by Carter's supporters so that even when he went bankrupt in that year, and accepted the Chiltern Hundreds, it was the radical alderman John Barran, chairman of the Liberal Association, who secured the Liberal nomination over Baines.[26] He was twenty-one years younger than Baines and the events at the nomination showed that the control of the Leeds Liberals had, albeit temporarily, "passed out of the hands of its old leaders into those of men who managed the new 'machine'".[27]

William Wheelhouse was one of two Conservatives who were successful in the general election of 1874 but he was not re-elected in 1880 and he ran, unsuccessfully, five years later against Herbert Gladstone, the prime-minister's son, in the West Division of Leeds. Conservatives returned at least one member for the borough until 1885, when it was split into five divisions. After that date they consistently returned two members until the turn of the century.

Mid-nineteenth century Leeds politics had lost some of the intensity which had been exhibited in the period 1832-52. It would not be fair to conclude, however, that the equilibrium which had been established was a manifestation of inertia. At various times the Conservatives exhibited great determination to improve their strength on town council just as the Liberals were able to contest the Guardians' elections vigorously enough in 1853, 1854, and 1859, to form the majority on the Board. Similarly, the return of a member from each party for most parliamentary elections should not detract from the important fact that their return was not the result of a compact between the parties but a manifestation of the decisions of the Leeds electorate.

In Leeds, the Liberal party struggled to remain united against the inherent contradiction of the whig and radical philosophies espoused by its different components. In the mid-nineteenth century the whigs retained control in spite of the creation of a short-lived party of 'advanced Liberals' and the establishment of a 'working men's' parliamentary reform association. The first organization was unable to achieve its goal due to the intransigence of Edward Baines and the second group was manipulated by him. Baines' control, of course, did not outlast the Second Reform Act for, even though he was returned at the head of the poll in the 1868 election, it was a final act of deference to the 'Bainesocracy' on the part of the Leeds electorate.

[1] Fraser, "Politics in Leeds," p. 491.

[2] Ibid., p. 492.

[3] Trevor Lloyd, "Uncontested Seats in British General Elections, 1852-1910," *Historical Journal* VIII (1965): 260.

[4] Ibid.

[5] David C. Moore, "The Matter of the Missing Contests: Towards a Theory of the Mid-19th Century British Political System," *Albion* 6 (1974): 97.

[6] E.W. Cox and S.G. Grady, *The New Law and Practice of Registration and Elections*, 10th ed. 1868 cited in H.J. Hanham, ed. *Dod's Electoral Facts, 1832-53*, (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1972), p.Ixi. Serjeant Cox was the author of the best-selling election manual of the period.

[7] Ibid., p. lx.

[8] William B. Gwyn, *Democracy and the Cost of Politics in Britain*, (London: Athlone Press, 1962), p. 71.

[9] *Leeds Express*, 15 July 1865.

[10] *Leeds Mercury*, 9, 11, 13 June 1857.

[11] *Leeds Times*, 21 March 1857.

[12] *Leeds Mercury*, 2 February 1861.

[13] Evidence of Robert Addyman, Report of the House of Commons Select Committee on Parliamentary and Municipal Elections, 23 July 1869, paragraphs 1487 and 1491.

[14] See Gwyn, *Democracy and the Cost of Politics*, p. 64. Councillor Gaunt believed that bribery might be introduced into 'pure' wards in municipal elections if the vote were close. Evidence of Edwin Gaunt, Report of the House of Commons Select Committee on Parliamentary and Municipal Elections, 23 July 1869, paragraph 1596.

[15] There was a tie in Kirkgate in 1859 and Bramley in 1865. Both wards, of course had figured prominently in misdoings at local elections.

[16] *Leeds Times*, 15 October 1859.

[17] Leeds Mercury, 2 November 1863.

[18] Hennock, Fit and Proper Persons, p. 207.

[19] Fraser, "Politics in Leeds," p. 519.

[20] J.R. Vincent, The Formation of the British Liberal Party 1857-1868, (Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1976), p. 88.

[21] Leeds Intelligencer, 23 April 1859.

[22] J. Vincent and M. Stenton, eds. McCalmont's Parliamentary Poll Book: British Election Results 1832-1918, 8th ed. (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1971), p. 165.

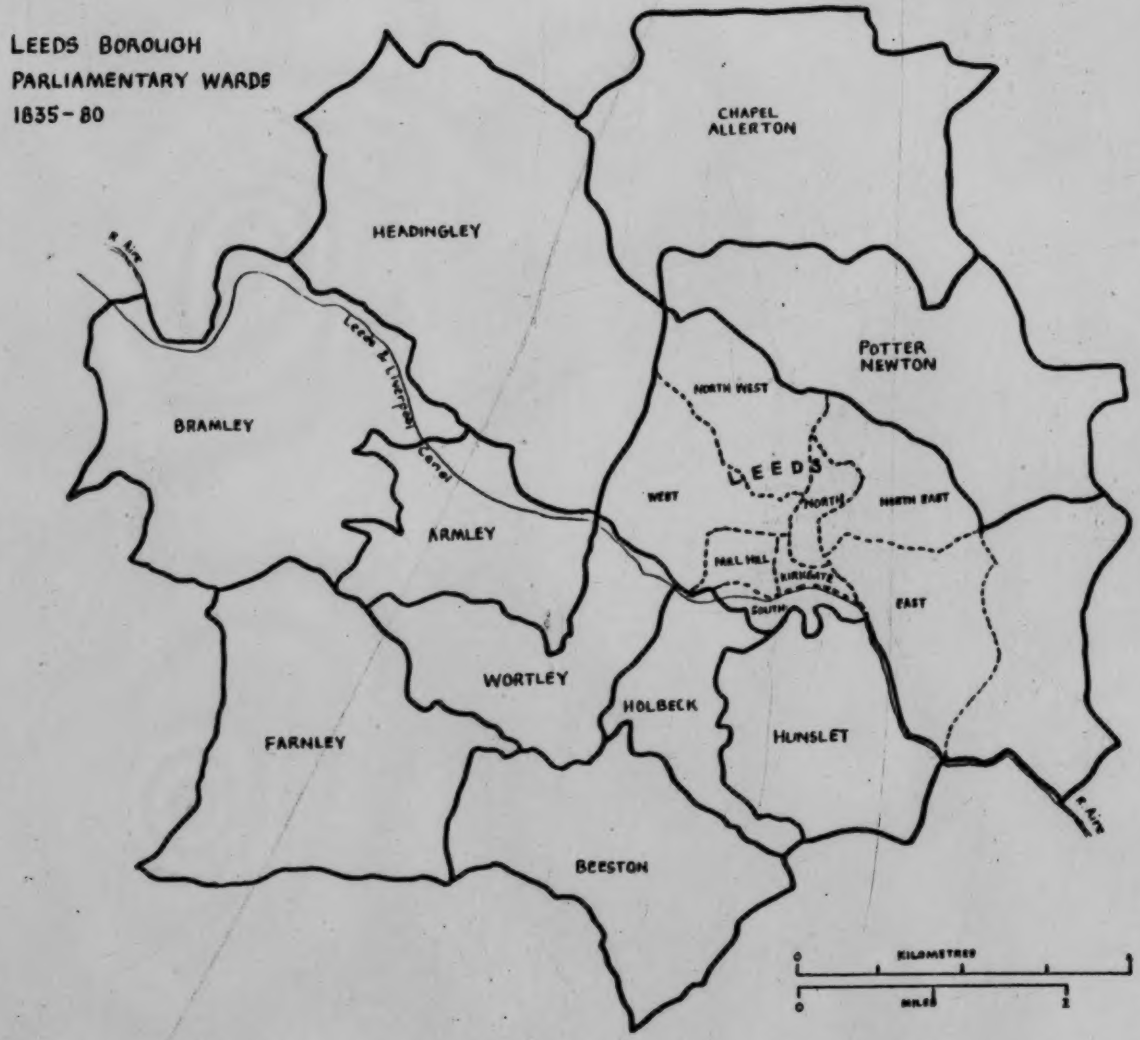
[23] Cited in Vincent, Formation of Liberal Party, pp. 124-126.

[24] Baines had abandoned voluntaryism in 1867. He was a member of the Taunton Commission which, in 1868, reported on the state of secondary education.

[25] Leeds Express, 24 October 1863.

[26] Hennock, Fit and Proper Persons, p. 216.

[27] S.J. Reid, ed. Memoirs of Sir Wemyss Reid 1842-1885, (London, 1905), p. 222. Cited in H.J. Hanham, Elections and Party Management: Politics in the Time of Disraeli and Gladstone, 2nd ed. (Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1978), p. 126. See also A.W. Roberts, "Leeds Liberalism and Late-Victorian Politics," Northern History V (1970): 133. Roberts has determined that the radical ascendancy was short-lived.



LEEDS BOROUGH
PARLIAMENTARY WARDS
1835-80

CHAPEL ALLERTON
HEADINGLEY
POTTER NEWTON
BRAMLEY
NORTH WEST
LEEDS
WEST
NORTH
NORTH EAST
ARMLEY
MILL HILL
KIRKGATE
SOUTH
EAST
WORTLEY
HOLBECK
HUNSLET
FARNLEY
BEESTON
R. Aire
R. Aire
Leeds & Liverpool Canal
KILOMETRES
0
3
MILES
0
2

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